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OPINION METER

This week's poll:
Which alternative energy do you think would work best in the CNMI: geothermal, OTEC, nuclear, wind, solar, or biomass?

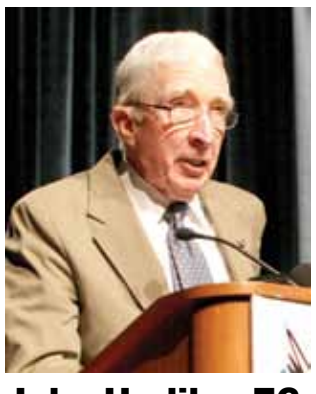
Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

121 DAYS without a government budget for FY 2009

INSIDE

Family Tragedy
A medical technician fatally shot his wife, five young children and himself after claiming that he and his wife both had just been fired.

NATION...Page 14



John Updike, 76
John Updike, the Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist, died Tuesday at age 76.

LIFE & STYLE...Page 18

Help sought to determine cause of death of Marpi remains. **PAGE 3**
Saipan teenager dies after car accident in Seattle. **PAGE 5**

WITH LOSS OF RUSSIA, CHINA MARKETS

NMI faces $183M economic loss

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The CNMI stands to lose $108.9 million in economic opportunities this year as a result of the federalization of immigration this June and the loss of the Russian and Chinese tourists, according to the Marianas Visitors Authority chief.

See NMI on Page 4

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

A tourist family walks past bougainvilleas in bloom in the front garden of the Saipan World Resort yesterday afternoon. Tourism arrivals to the CNMI rose by 2 percent to 396,274 in calendar year 2008 compared to the previous year.

Hotel occupancy in '08 only at 61.89 percent—HANMI

Uncertainty ahead in 2009 and beyond

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Average hotel occupancy stood only at 61.89 percent in 2008, way below the average profitability threshold of 70 percent, latest data from the 14-strong Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands shows.

This, however, marked a 3 percentage-point increase over the 2007 average hotel occupancy of 58.89 percent due to

See HOTEL on Page 4

CNMI residents connecting on Facebook

ON THE NET
website: www.facebook.com

This screenshot shows the Facebook account of Gov. Benigno R. Fitial.

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Besides being politicians, what does Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, Delegate Gregorio "Kilili" Sablan, President Barack Obama, and several lawmakers have in common?

They are all on Facebook and the number of people in the CNMI who are joining the largest online social networking Web site is growing by the day. From politicians to doctors, lawyers, engineers, teachers, clerks, students, parents and even the jobless now have a Facebook account.

Given Saipan's isolation, many individuals use Facebook to connect

See FACEBOOK on Page 4

Yana, Atalig back in jail

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Superior Court Associate Judge Kenneth Govendo ordered yesterday the continued detention of attorneys Reynaldo O. Yana and Antonio M. Atalig, denying them attorneys' fees and ruling that they owe $1.3 million to the Angel Malite estate.

Yana

Atalig

"Mr. Yana and Mr. Atalig, you should be ashamed of yourselves!" said Govendo, telling the two lawyers they are not going to get a single cent from the Malite estate.

After the hearing, a visibly irate Atalig told the media that people in the Marianas should know that Govendo is a marijuana user.

Yana said they will definitely appeal.

The 65-year-old Yana said he

See YANA on Page 4

Local

Questions abound in GTC-soccer project ruckus

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

Officials within the Public School System and the Legislature are at odds with Gov. Benigno Fitial about the recent decision to fund the construction of a soccer field over the renovation of dilapidated buildings at the Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School.

Last week it was reported that Fitial decided to rescind an $800,000 Northern Marianas Housing Corp. grant for GTC Elementary in order to build a soccer field in Koblerville.

But Fitial has no authority to reallocate NMHC grant money because it is a part of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, a federal program, said Charles Reyes, press secretary for the Governor's Office. There is no documentation stating he overruled NMHC, which has its own standards and criteria for approving grant applications, the press secretary said.

"I don't think the governor technically, legally has the ability to overrule," Reyes said. "The governor doesn't have the power, by himself, to tell an agency that is separate from the Executive Branch" what to do. The governor signs off on the grant, but it is a matter of course, he added.

Reyes said the governor is committed to providing funds to GTC using $1.2 million in Capital Improvement Project money from the Office of Insular Affairs that was reprogrammed to PSS. At least $66,000 of the money will be allotted to GTC for an electrical upgrade and termite treatment, according to a Dec. 17 letter from Fitial and CIP administrator Vicky Villagomez to NMHC.

Yesterday, Rep. Ray Yumul and House Floor Leader Joseph Camacho authored a resolution that "requests Governor Benigno R. Fitial to reconsider his decision and to allow NMHC to continue with the construction of classrooms for Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School for the benefit of students."

Rep. Ralph DLG Torres has scheduled a meeting with PSS Education Commissioner Rita Sablan to check the status of other CIP projects within the school system.

GTC principal Charlotte Camacho said there must be a breakdown in communication between the parties.

"I hate to point fingers," she said yesterday. "We understood that our proposal was approved by NMHC and that it needed the concurrence of the governor. That was our understanding. Now, things have changed and they said, 'oh no, no the governor has no say-so.' I don't know where that came from."

In a Sept. 24 e-mail, NMHC grant writer Jeannie Masfnas wrote to Camacho that the NMHC board of directors had approved $600,000 for rehabilitation and $200,000 for collateral improvement. Masfnas could not be reached for comment yesterday.

Camacho said she is trying to get answers from NMHC as well as meet with Fitial.

"They [NMHC] told me they fought tooth and nail for the project, but it's not their decision," she said. "But then I heard from the Governor's Office that he has no authority to do that. I just don't know who to believe."

The school has only been able to remain open because school officials presented a plan stating they would get the funding for the repairs, Camacho said. The school is fumigated once a month and traps are laid out, but that is not enough, she said.

"That's a band-aid approach to this problem. Come September, what happens when the contract ends?" she asked.

Reyes said Fitial has not been able to meet with the principal this week but hopes to do so next week.

Both the GTC renovations and the soccer field were eligible for the NMHC grant, but the soccer field is not eligible for CIP funding, Reyes said. The ideal situation, Reyes said, is to make both projects a reality.

"A sports facility does not qualify [for CIP funding]," the press secretary said. "On the other hand, the CDBG is open for that project. It's available. Actually both projects—the GTC project and the soccer facility—technically qualify for CDGB funding, but the problem is, it may be more of a strategic decision," he said, adding that there would be no other way to get the funding for the soccer field because there are no local funds available.

It's important to remember, he said, that soccer is a very popular sport among countries like Brazil, China, Japan and countries in Europe.

"It's a huge sport. The idea here is that we want to get the best return on our investment in the long term," he said, noting that with a world-class facility, the CNMI could draw international tournaments, helping the local economy.

NMC posts 108 'nonresident' students in Spring enrolment

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The Northern Marianas College has a total of 108 nonresident students this Spring semester—a number that may be affected once federalization comes in June this year.

Data from the Office of Admission and Records showed that these nonresident students were counted in the total enrollment figure of 825 as of yesterday.

NMC has two categories for students: resident enrollees who pay $95 per credit unit and nonresidents who pay double, or $190 per credit unit.

Last Fall 2008, NMC recorded 124 nonresident students availing of all the institution's programs and services.

NMC could not immediately determine yesterday whether these nonresident enrollees have student visas, citing the different "types" of visas and permits allowed for them to be in the institution.

In an early interview with Department of Homeland Security policy adviser Alex Hartman, he disclosed that besides the "impact" on tourism, some educational institutions that cater to foreign students would be affected as they would require obtaining the necessary visas for enrollees.

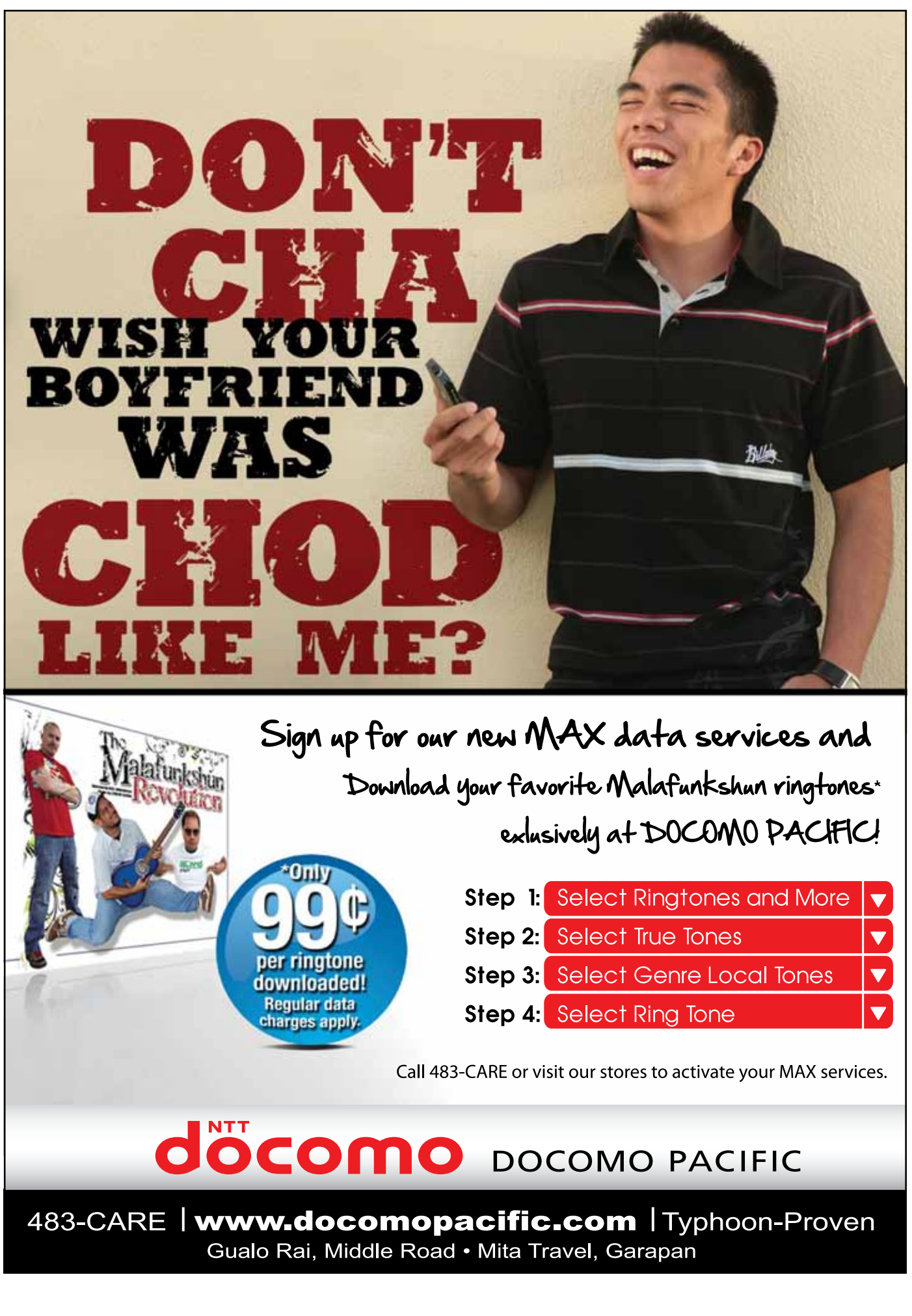
Hartman said there are two student visa categories: Foreign students wanting to avail of academic programs at NMC will be asked to obtain the "F" category, while vocational programs are under the "M" category.

Though he refused to give specifics on these visas, he said the two are generally the requirements to allow foreign students to "come here, stay, and study."

NMC officials believe that federalization will affect its recruitment efforts, especially in tapping potential enrollees from foreign countries like China.

Most of the CNMI private schools are also hosts to foreign students like Koreans, Chinese, Japanese, Indians, and Filipinos.

Like NMC, administrators of these private schools have expressed worry about the effect of federalization on their enrollment. Other postsecondary schools that may be affected are institutions like Emmanuel College, CNMI University of Loyola, American Mediscience University, and others.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Help sought to determine cause of death of Marpi remains

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Attorney General's Office will consult Guam's chief medical examiner, Dr. Aurelio Espinola, to determine the cause of death of the remains found in Marpi last Saturday.

This developed as the Department of Public Safety said yesterday that police investigators are still waiting for family members of Alex M. Matubis to provide them with his dental records that are needed to link the remains to the surveyor.

In an interview, Chief Prosecutor Kevin Lynch said they usually call Dr. Espinola to perform forensic examination or autopsies when they have questions as to cause of death or violent death.

Lynch said they usually use Espinola's services when they suspect that there may be criminal liability or other circumstances that they feel requires an autopsy.

With respect to the Marpi remains, the chief prosecutor said that, even though it's been reported that the remains are just bones, that would not end the inquiry.

"There's still a lot of scientific examination that is possible. So once we get some facts from DPS, we will consult with [Espinola] regarding what's the next best step in the investigation," he said.

Lynch said the cause of death of the skeletal remains could possibly be determined through a forensic examination.

"There have been cases, especially in other jurisdictions, where an examination of the bones or examination of the clothing in conjunction with the examination of the skeleton can tell a lot of the manner of death. So that's something that we will certainly discuss with him and send him reports and possibly photographs and other information, consult with him about the best course to take," Lynch said.

Dr. Espinola, according to the chief prosecutor, is a "very experienced forensic pathologist" who has been of great assistance to CNMI authorities when they review facts and decide what direction to take in an investigation.

DPS Criminal Investigation Bureau's acting commander Sgt. Sylvan Rangamar on Tuesday stated that the remains found in Marpi are "presumptive positive" as that of missing Matubis based on the items—driver's license and wedding ring—recovered from the remains.

The 47-year-old surveyor came back to Saipan from Tinian last July 29. He was supposed to go back that afternoon to Tinian but he never showed up. His employer reported him missing on July 30 last year.

Last Aug. 19, investigators found Matubis' company-service pickup abandoned near Kalabera Cave after receiving a call from one of three persons who saw the vehicle.

The remains were found near a cow fence (not at the fence) of a farm that is located about a 10-minute drive west of Kalabera Cave, according to DPS.

Matubis and a surveyor-helper conducted a survey in the Kalabera Cave area a few weeks before he was reported missing.

Deportation case vs accident fatality closed

The Superior Court has ordered the closure of the deportation case filed against Rodriguez Jonas Suka, a Chuukese man who was killed when two vehicles struck him one after the other along Beach Road in Susupe.

Associate Judge David Wiseman removed Suka's case from the court's docket following the Division of Immigration's motion to close proceedings as the respondent was killed in a car accident on Jan. 20.

Suka was pronounced dead upon arrival at the Commonwealth Health Center after two cars struck him along Beach Road.

The two drivers were not arrested or cited after traffic investigators determined that they were not under the influence of alcohol and were not speeding.

Chief Prosecutor Kevin Lynch told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday that, based on his information, Suka was out of jail despite the deportation order because he was allowed to get his travel documents.

Wiseman had ordered Suka's deportation on Oct. 31, 2008,

Wiseman also ordered that Suka's travel documents, if any, are to be released to Immigration investigator Nick Reyes for repatriation purposes.

Wiseman ruled that "by clear and convincing evidence" Suka, a citizen from the Federated States of Micronesia—Chuuk—is a deportable alien in that he was convicted of five misdemeanors.

An Immigration investigator earlier also told *Saipan Tribune* that Suka was released so he could obtain a passport from Guam. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

CDA recommends revocation of Tinian Dynasty QC

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Development Authority wants the qualifying certificate it issued to Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino revoked after the hotel was found not complying with the program's requirements, including "tax issues," environmental concerns, and violations of the American Disabilities Act as stated in the approved certificate.

Saipan Tribune learned yesterday that the CDA recommendation was submitted to the governor on Dec. 22, 2008. He has 45 days—or up until Feb. 4—to approve or turn down CDA's request. If the governor fails to act on the recommendation, it will be deemed disapproved.

In an interview yesterday with CDA economic development analyst Carline Sablan, she confirmed the agency's recommendation to Gov. Benigno R. Fitial.

The CNMI QC program was established by law in December 2000. It was later amended to include a rollback provision that entitles existing tourism businesses on the islands to avail of the program, provided they pass the minimum requirement of $2 million investment and the business is in line with the tourism industry.

For Saipan, Hard Rock Café was accepted; Dynasty on Tinian; and the Rota Casino.

Sablan disclosed the following abatements approved by CDA for Dynasty's QC: 100 percent abatement of BGRT in years 1-3; 50 percent abatement of BGRT in years 4-7; and 30 percent abatement of BGRT in years 8-10.

Dynasty was also entitled an abatement in its bar tax—50 percent in year 1-7 and 30 percent abatement in bar tax in years 8-10.

However, Sablan emphasized that the above benefits do not become official until CDA issues a "compliance certificate" to the beneficiary.

"To date, none of them are official because CDA did not issue a compliance certificate to Dynasty…due to the reason that they did not comply with the requirements of the provisional QC we granted," she explained, declining to elaborate on Dynasty's noncompliance with "tax issues."

Sablan said the company was given the opportunity to ask for an administrative hearing but did not do so.

"All our beneficiaries are fully aware of their status and prior to this recommendation for revocation, we informed them," she said.

The CDA official admitted that Dynasty has not been in compliance for many years. However, it was only this time that CDA finally acted to push the QC's revocation.

As procedure, CDA handed out non-compliance forms to different government agencies, which report to CDA whether the QC beneficiaries are in good standing or not. If they're not, the agency works with the QC beneficiary and asks them to work on the concerns.

A beneficiary needs to comply with applicable U.S, and CNMI laws as well as each agency's rules and regulations.

Sablan said when a beneficiary's QC is revoked, this is classified as an inactive qualifying certificate.

'Buyout negotiation'

Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino officials earlier admitted that some Korean companies had expressed interest in acquiring the facility but vehemently denied that there are concrete "buyout negotiations."

Dynasty is the sole local revenue source of Tinian that remits a portion of its revenue to the Tinian Gaming Commission to pay for the salary of local employees in the municipality. The business was opened in 1998.

Early this month, Tinian Local Delegation chair Sen. Joseph Mendiola revealed that local leaders will ask Dynasty officials to a meeting on the current status of the business.

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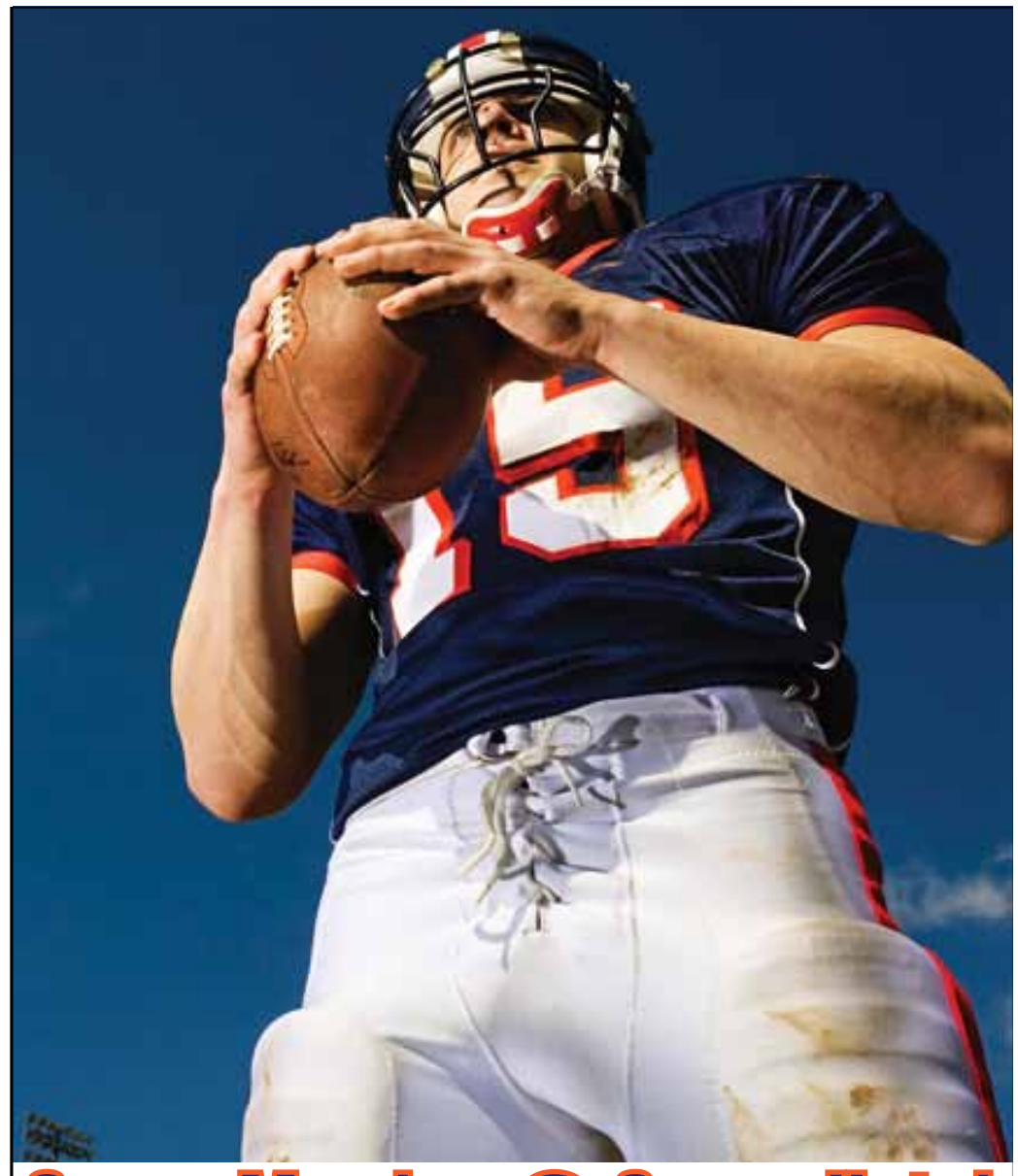

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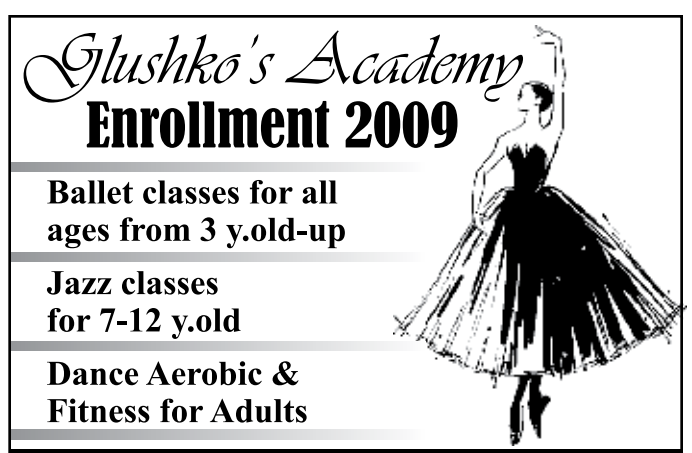
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YANA

From Page 1

may die in jail after a year or two because the money—which he and Atalig believe belongs to them—is already gone.

At the hearing, Govendo ordered Yana and Atalig to report to the Department of Corrections tomorrow, Friday, at 8am.

"I will be calling DOC at 8:15am. If you are not there, I will issue a bench warrant. You are not taking this seriously!" the judge said.

Govendo said the two lawyers owe $1,288,500 to the Malite estate after they failed to return the attorneys' fees they got from the estate.

He ordered Yana to pay the estate $330,000, while Atalig was directed to pay the remaining balance.

"This is disgraceful!" Govendo said.

Govendo said the money belongs to the Malite estate and not the attorneys.

The judge reiterated his earlier position that there is no such thing as contingency fee when it comes to estate probate.

Govendo said Yana and Atalig were trying to reconstruct the attorney's fees because they thought they were entitled to a third of the money received by the Malite estate.

Govendo said it is beyond his understanding why the attorneys' fees that Atalig and Yana got were approved through an "ex parte by a former judge." It was former Associate Judge Juan T. Lizama who approved the attorneys' fees.

"They [Yana and Atalig] spent like, 'Oh boy! What a break! Let's spend it!'" Govendo said.

Govendo suggested that Yana contact his friends and relatives in the Philippines to help him pay the money.

He also urged Atalig to contact Roman Demapan and get from him at least $200,000 to $250,000. Govendo said that Demapan, although not a paralegal, apparently received the money after he performed "paralegal" services for Atalig's law firm.

Govendo said there was no great legal argument or research done in the Malite case. "Hundreds of hours of legal work for what? A handful of documents?" he said.

Citing a CNMI Supreme Court ruling that denied attorney's fees for excessiveness, Govendo noted that Yana and Atalig both filed vague attorneys' billings.

Citing 626 hours of "conference" with a former Malite estate administrator, Govendo said this is what the Supreme Court had in mind when it made the ruling in the previous case.

In reading the breakdown of expenses, Govendo said Yana spent $300,000 in a one-year period. Yana reportedly got $330,000 in attorney's fees.

When Govendo asked him about it, Yana simply agreed.

The judge cited Yana's expenses that include $2,815 for PlayStations and Gameboys and $1,400 for DVDs.

"You were a Santa Claus for a year!" Govendo said.

Emerging from the court after the hearing, Atalig asked the waiting media to tell Govendo that he should stop smoking marijuana and stop ruling from the bench.

"Tell Govendo to stop smoking marijuana. That's his favorite. He loves to send people to jail and he himself smokes marijuana. That guy has to pay his dues, too. Tell him to go to jail for smoking marijuana. He is not supposed to sit on the bench. Let the whole Marianas understand this," Atalig said.

He said he has witnesses to prove that Govendo smokes pot.

"The guy is crazy. So everything is free these days? Whose lawyers are going to continue to handle these kinds of cases for free?" Atalig asked.

Yana said they've been saying all along that Govendo is biased; that's why they wanted him disqualified from presiding over the case.

"But he doesn't want to get off the case and we expected this," Yana said.

He said there is no question that they are going to appeal.

Yana said they are not going to pay because they don't have the money anymore.

He said he is definitely going to report to DOC on Friday.

"I kinda get used to it. We've been there for nine months, so nothing unusual anymore," he said. "So I just have to go to jail and keep on going to jail and stay in jail until … So maybe I'm going to die one or two years from now, so I get to stay in jail for only two years," Yana said, smiling.

Attorney Stephen Nutting, counsel for some of the Malite heir claimants, said he is very happy with the court's decision.

"It's been a long time coming. There's a lot of time and effort in trying to recover this money. That job is still not finished yet," Nutting said.

The current Malite estate administrator, Esther Sound, said she is very happy with the decision.

"It's been very tough with the family. My mom passed away last year. I guess she is looking down on us right now and I really appreciate the work of Mr. Nutting. My mom told us to stand strong. And he's [Nutting] been behind us all these times," Sound said.

She added that this case should serve as a lesson to attorneys that "they just cannot take advantage of us."

Last Jan. 16, Govendo ordered the temporary release of Yana and Atalig as their "last opportunity" to explain how they calculated their attorneys' fees.

Govendo allowed Yana and Atalig out from jail until the next hearing, which was yesterday.

Atalig has submitted to the court a report showing that from 1995 to 2007 he provided legal services in the Malite estate for a total of 6,108 hours or equivalent to $2.1 million in attorney's fees.

Atalig and Yana have been in jail for nine months since March 2008 when Govendo found them in civil contempt for failing to return the $1.3 million they got as attorneys' fees in the Malite probate. They were temporarily released from DOC on Jan. 5.

FACEBOOK

From Page 1

and chat with distant friends, relatives and classmates from elementary, high school or college.

"It's addicting," said John Blanco, director of the Department of Commerce's Central Statistics Division.

He said in less than two weeks since he became a member, he already has 198 friends on Facebook.

"A college roommate I hadn't heard from for 15 years was on Facebook so I got to connect with him again," he said.

Many post images of Saipan's tourist spots, photos of all the parties they attended, or links to current events or cute feature stories. Others also turn to Facebook and other social networking sites when news breaks to share stories and pictures.

Floor Leader Joseph Camacho said Facebook allows him to show a side of him that the public doesn't see, including the chance to post jokes and stories.

He, however, maintains his public website, www.camachocnmi.com, where the public can view proposed legislation, committee reports and voting records, among other things.

Camacho and Rep. Tina Sablan are among two members of the CNMI House of Representatives that maintain a Facebook account, along with top officials including Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, acting Attorney General Gregory Baka, Health Secretary Joseph Kevin Villagomez, Board of Education vice chair Herman Guerrero and Labor Deputy Secretary Cinta M. Kaipat.

"Since Facebook is a personal forum, I can show my personality outside of my official public role. For example, I like jokes, Sci-Fi shows and old music videos so I post these things. Those who know me for a long time know that I am a joker and love telling stories. With Facebook, I can express that side of me that the public does not always see," Camacho said.

Others use it to tell their friends and relatives, "I am happy" or they are "looking forward to a long weekend" or "is going to Forbidden Island today" or "Now engaged."

Many use Facebook to post upcoming events or as a marketing tool. One user, for example, said in her Facebook status yesterday, "recruiting Teams for the 2009 Marianas March against Cancer."

Frank Tudela of the Marianas Visitors Authority uses Facebook on a daily basis "to post upcoming events" related to MVA, as well as to keep in touch with family members. He said he spends hours on Facebook, and thinks he "will never leave" the social network.

"It has also helped me with annual events and get more friends," he said.

Tudela prefers Facebook over MySpace, while Camacho said Facebook is easy to use. "You do not have to be a computer expert," he added.

Just like the other users, Tudela thinks Facebook is now the "in" thing on Saipan. His cousins, best friends, and close friends are members, too.

Kae Atalig, 21, said this is one site where "people with no jobs and people with lots of responsibilities in government" meet. She has 135 Facebook friends and counting.

"It's a way to connect with my long lost relatives and friends," said Atalig, whose favorite Facebook "activity" is tagging people in photos and posting shoutouts.

President Barack Obama and his supporters used Facebook for his grassroots presidential campaign. Many on Saipan are "fans" of Obama on Facebook.

Facebook started as a social network exclusively for Harvard students. It was launched on Feb. 4, 2004, by Mark Zuckerberg and later became one of the biggest online phenomena. Facebook's growth in the fall of 2007 was staggering. Over 1 million new users signed up every week, 200,000 daily, totaling over 150 million active users.

Its competitors include MySpace, Bebo, Friendster, LinkedIn, Tagged, Hi5, Piczo and Open Social.

HOTEL

From Page 1

an increase in tourist arrivals, but still lower than the 63.43 percent recorded in 2006.

"2008 was slightly better in terms of tourist arrivals but because of the power/fuel costs skyrocketing for several months and the two months of power outages, not to mention the cloud of uncertainty over the passage of the federalization bill, I don't know if anyone could say that this was a good year," HANMI chair Lynn Knight said.

The weighted hotel average occupancy is the sum of room nights sold divided by the total number of room nights available for sale by reporting hotels.

In 2008, there were 637,559 room nights sold of the 1,030,467 room nights available for sale.

The average profitability threshold is in the 70 percent range, but because the CNMI's occupancy averaged only in the 60 percent range, "hotels are still not making healthy profits," Knight added.

Hotels, just like other businesses, also had to increase the minimum wage by 50 cents last year, which affected many hotel employees. This summer, the current $4.05 hourly minimum wage will be increased by another 50 cents to $4.55.

"The wage increase was not done because we had more money coming in. It was mandated by U.S. Congress that had no CNMI representation at the time. All in all, we have a lot of challenges and uncertainty ahead of us in 2009 and beyond," said Knight.

The December 2008 average occupancy stood at 62.24 percent, slightly up from the previous December's 61.21 percent.

Average room rates rose by 5.62 percent points—from $92.12 in 2007 to $97.74 in 2008.

In December alone, the average room rate reached $109.70 compared to the same month the previous year.

Hotels paid a gross receipts tax of $3.132 million in 2008, a 10-percent increase over the $2.838 million paid the previous year.

Room occupancy tax paid totaled $6.264 million last year compared to the previous year's $5.677 million.

HANMI also recorded 397,274 arrivals in 2008, a 2-percent increase from 389,345 in 2007. Most of them came from Japan (213,299), Korea (111,116), China (26,878), Guam (19,273), U.S. (11,793), Russia (6,814), the Philippines (1,780), Taiwan (284), and other countries (6,037).

HANMI was established in 1985, after hotel executives came together and saw the need to form an organization representing the hospitality industry in the CNMI.

NMI

From Page 1

This loss, Perry Tenorio said yesterday, is only for up to the end of 2009 and could go higher if it takes the Department of Homeland Security much longer to hammer out the rules under which Russian and Chinese tourists could come to the CNMI.

"The estimated losses from Russia and China markets is just for six months… but if you roll it out for a year, we're looking at $184 million in economic losses annually," Tenorio said.

It may take Department of Homeland Security 12 to 18 months before it can establish the necessary security protocols for the Russia and China markets, he added.

The federalization law excluded these two markets from the CNMI-Guam U.S. Visa Waiver program. This means that tourists from these destinations cannot enter the CNMI without a valid U.S. visa.

Records from the MVA showed that the islands welcomed about 27,000 Chinese visitors and about 7,000 Russian visitors in calendar year 2008.

With the exclusion of the two markets alone, MVA is looking at more than a 90-percent overall impact on the tourist arrivals in the CNMI.

"We will lose that opportunity and even if we get 5 percent of these people [from Russia and China] we will never make up the economic impact of these visitors who have been to our island," Tenorio told *Saipan Tribune*.

More bad news

Tenorio said another $73.8 million is expected to go out the window due to the termination of Northwest Airlines' Osaka-to-Saipan air service on March 1, 2009. The termination of the Osaka flight means that the CNMI will lose 66,248 air seats annually.

Although the CNMI still has Asiana's flight service from Osaka, its aircraft has less seat capacity than Northwest's.

Asiana flies Osaka-Saipan three times weekly using a 177-seat aircraft seasonally. Tenorio said that projected estimated annual seats by Asiana on an annual basis is approximately 12,744, which makes up only 20 percent of Northwest's 66,248 annual seats.

From the Osaka service alone, about 50,000 tourists were on island last year.

"The current pattern does not offset the losses we will get from Northwest…but at least we still provide opportunity for people from Osaka to directly fly to the CNMI," Tenorio said, alluding to Asiana's Osaka service that was launched Dec. 19, 2008.

'Asiana's commitment'

MVA is counting on the serious commitment of Asiana Airlines to the Commonwealth.

Currently, the signatory airline has 18 regular flights to Saipan.

Tenorio said that, although Asiana may adjust the type of equipment they use, MVA is confident that it will continue its service.

"Asiana has schedule air service…depending on the season and demand, they may down up or down gauge their equipment rather than terminating their air service," Tenorio said, adding that the airline has still 18 regular flights to CNMI.

The airline has two daily flight services from Incheon and four times weekly from Busan, Korea.

Japan Airlines pulled out its service from the CNMI in October 2005, adversely affecting the islands' tourism industry, which retains Japan as its primary market.

Saipan teenager dies after car accident in Seattle

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A Saipan-born teenager died in a Seattle hospital last Sunday after being in a coma for almost four months due to head injuries he sustained in a car accident in Seattle.

Jesse Daryl "JD" Lizama Sablan, who turned 18 last Christmas Day, reportedly fell from a parked car on Oct. 5, 2008.

According to Dorothy Reyes Lizama Sablan, her son JD had just attended a party with some friends.

As JD and two other male friends were sitting and chatting on top of a car's trunk, a person got into the car and drove off.

JD and his two friends fell down. JD and one of his friends were injured; the third one was not.

Mrs. Sablan said the second victim was able to recover from his injuries, but her son, JD, fell into a coma due to brain injuries.

Mrs. Sablan said the case is still under investigation, but police already know the driver because there were witnesses.

"Jesse was soft-hearted, respectful, loving, fun to be around, and motivated to do whatever he set his mind to do. He enjoyed being around kids and most especially family," she said.

Mrs. Sablan said her son was very good in football and basketball and that music was one of his greatest joys.

"He will be remembered for his wonderful sense of humor, infectious laugh, as well as all those jokes he used to tell to cheer up a close friend whenever they felt down or sad," she said.

JD's father is retired CNMI government employee, Edward Iglesias Sablan. He has one sister, Geralyn, and four brothers—Edward Jr., Edwin Gregory, Jason Christopher, and Gerald.

JD was born on Saipan. After graduating from the San Vicente Elementary School, his family relocated to Seattle, Washington in 2003.

The family said visitation will be on Friday, Jan. 30, from 2pm to 9pm at Bonney Watson Washington Memorial Park at 16445 International Blvd. Sea Tac, WA 98188. Rosary will be held at 7pm.

Funeral services will be on Saturday, Jan. 31, at St. Bernadette Parish 861 S.W. 126th St. Seattle, WA 98146. Burial will immediately follow at Washington Memorial Park.

HANMI's Knight takes 6-month leave

By KRISTI EATON
kristi_eaton@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Century Hotel general manager and *Saipan Tribune* publisher Lynn Knight will be taking a six-month leave of absence from Tan Holdings Corp. in order to represent the governor in Washington D.C. on issues relating to the impending federalization law.

Knight said she would be using her past experience in the private sector to educate federal agencies on how potential regulations relating to federalization will affect the local economy.

"There needs to be a lot more education," she said. "We need to give a lot more input on this issue."

Knight will keep her title as chairperson of the Commonwealth Economic Development Strategy Commission, a position Gov. Benigno Fitial appointed her to in January 2008.

Knight

Members of the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands, which Knight is the chair of, will fund the position. A vice chair will take over the daily responsibilities of HANMI, while managers within the other businesses will be appointed to fulfill her duties.

Charles Reyes, press secretary for the Governor's Office, said Knight is very knowledgeable and familiar with federalization issues and welcomes her support.

Reyes said he urges other business leaders to get involved because the new law will greatly impact the local economy.

In a letter written by Fitial appointing Knight, the governor said she would work in cooperation with Howard Willens, the governor's special legal counsel. Fitial has instructed her to keep CNMI Rep. Gregorio "Kilili" Sablan and the CNMI Legislature's Federalization Task Force up to date on the issues.

The new position will take effect Feb. 1. Knight, who will make a trip to the CNMI in April for an economic summit, said she will soon create a Web site where the public can access information and documents on the issues and work she does.

In March, Knight and Saipan Chamber of Commerce president Jim Arenovski traveled to Washington to meet with congressional staffers and department and agency personnel concerning the federalization law.

In May last year, President Bush signed the Consolidated Natural Resources Act into law. Starting June 1, unless otherwise delayed, U.S. immigration laws will apply to the CNMI. Several regulations relating to the new law are still under development.

Colorado gov also wants state to host Guantanamo detainees

By KRISTI EATON
kristi_eaton@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI may have some competition from other places in United States hoping to house detainees from Guantanamo Bay.

Colorado Gov. Bill Ritter is also supporting the idea of transferring terror suspects to Florence, Colorado's federal Supermax prison.

Yumul

On Tuesday, Rep. Ray Yumul said that in light of President Obama's decision to close the Guantanamo Bay detention facility within the year, he wants the U.S. government to build a similar center in the CNMI, saying it could help the local economy.

"This is a good opportunity to not just provide for the services of national security, and for the protection of Americans to include the Commonwealth, but also to bring in fresh resources and income for our weakening economy," Yumul said.

"If the U.S. is having a hard time trying to find hosting nations to take some of these detainees, we're willing to do that here," he said.

"Economically, it's a very good opportunity because facilities will be built," he said, adding that the Commonwealth would see a multiplier effect because of the military and federal officials needed to administer such a facility. Locals could also be employed to work in the center, he said.

The Associated Press has reported a senior administration official as saying that Colorado's Supermax prison is being considered as a new home for some detainees.

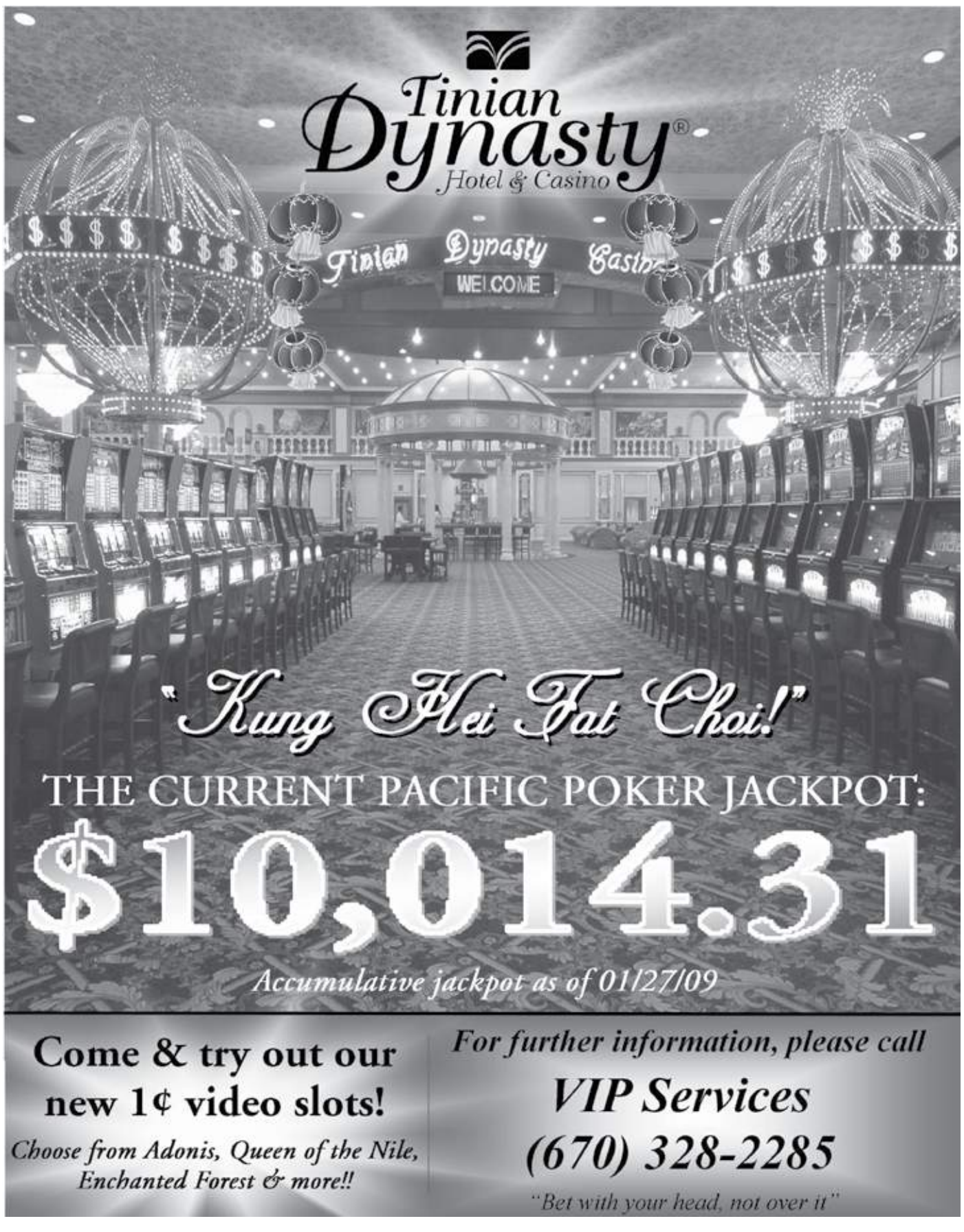
A spokesman for Ritter said the Supermax prison was built to handle inmates like those from Guantanamo, according to the *Denver Post*.

Some countries within the European Union have said they would be willing to take Gitmo prisoners—but only after detailed screenings took place.

Yumul said security should not be a concern for the CNMI because federal officials are capable of protecting the safety of the public.

"Some questions were brought up about the caliber of these detainees, and that it might subject us to increased threat, but I don't see that because the U.S. Customs and Border Protection is doing their job," Yumul said.

The Commonwealth, Yumul noted, has experience with housing detainees. In 1999, the U.S. government asked the CNMI host hundreds of undocumented Chinese nationals on Tinian, after they were intercepted on their way to Guam.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Foundation grants wishes to 2 Saipan children

The Make-A-Wish Foundation of Guam recently granted the wishes of two Saipan residents: 5-year-old Arjay Corpuz and 15-year-old Oliver San Nicolas.

Corpuz is an energetic and bright little boy who lights up any room with his smile. When Corpuz was first referred to the Foundation, he knew immediately what he wanted for his wish, and did not hesitate to say he wished to go to Disneyland and meet Mickey Mouse.

Plans were made to send Corpuz and his family to Tokyo Disneyland. Foundation board member Kathryn Barry worked closely with the family, the Guam chapter, and the Japan chapter to plan a memorable trip.

When asked to recall his most memorable moment of the wish, Corpuz simply said: "Seeing Mickey Mouse and Minnie Mouse and Donald Duck and Goofy …" then proceeded to name all the Disney characters.

Upon conclusion of Corpuz's wish, Make-A-Wish Foundation of Guam executive director Victor Camacho traveled to Saipan to grant the wish of San Nicolas. San Nicolas wished for an X-Box 360 and was granted his wish at a lunch held at Micro Beach in Garapan. Through support from Gamestop and numerous volunteers, San Nicolas received his wish complete with games and accessories. He also received a complimentary cellular phone from IT&E and was a special guest at Trench Tech's Rights of Passage VI: Conviction held last Jan. 24 on Saipan.

Camacho stated, "These wishes bring together the business community, the volunteers, and the islands of the Marianas in general. Despite all the economic hardships we are all facing, people genuinely want to help these kids, and businesses and individuals continue to support in whatever way they can. For these kids facing medical hardships, we'll do what we can to bring smiles to their faces."

These wishes were made possible by support from Gamestop, IT&E, Trench Tech, Herman's Modern Bakery, Hyatt Regency Saipan, JWS, Japan Consulate Office, Make-A-Wish Foundation of Japan and the Saipan volunteer team from Make-A-Wish Foundation.

The Make-A-Wish Foundation grants the wishes of children with life-threatening medical conditions to enrich the human experience with hope, strength and joy. The Guam chapter services the islands of Guam and the Northern Marianas. For more information about the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Guam, visit its website at www.guamwish.org or call its office at (671) 649-WISH. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Mickey Mouse takes a moment to pose with Wish child Arjay Corpuz at Tokyo Disneyland on Jan. 20, 2009.

Members of the Saipan wish granting team pose with Wish child Oliver San Nicolas during his wish presentation at Micro Beach last Jan. 24, 2009. From left, MAWF board member Vicky Benavente, MAWF executive director Victor Camacho, volunteer Rosalyn Castro-Quintanilla, volunteer Josephine Mesta, Oliver San Nicolas, volunteer Desirae Herrera, and MAWF board member Kathryn Barry.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE PLANNING AGENCY
Criminal Justice Statistical Analysis Center
P.O. Box 501133 Chalan Kanoa • Saipan, MP 96950
TEL: (670) 664-4550 • Fax: (670) 664-4560

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC §9912, hereby giving notice that the CNMI State Advisory Group (SAG), also known as the "Youth Advisory Council" (YAC) of the Criminal Justice Planning Agency will hold an Award Meeting on **Friday, January 30 2009, 9:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M., Napu Conference Room, Pacific Island Club, Saipan**

AGENDA

I. Call to order

II. Roll Call

III. Review and Adoption of Agenda

IV. Review and Adoption of Minutes *(Award Meeting – November 21, 2008)*

V. Old Business

- Plans for 2009 Submission of 3 year State Plan

VI. New Business

- Awarding of remaining 2008 Enforcing Underage Drinking Laws (EUDL)Grant
  - Department of Commerce
  - Public School System
  - Other
- Meeting with all EUDL Subgrantees

VII. Announcements

- Next Meeting

VIII. Adjournment

Should you need more information, please call the CJPA office.

/s/Mr. Edward Manibusan
Chairperson
CJPA Youth Advisory Council

/s/Mr. Jerome I. Ierome
Executive Director
CJPA

Publication of this notice was paid for with federal funds made possible by Grant# 2006-JF-FX-0045, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice.

Alam is WSR spelling bee champion

BY MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Ten-year-old Masrur S. Alam ruled the William S. Reyes Elementary School spelling bee competition on Tuesday and emerged its overall champion.

The fifth grader will represent the school in the Scripps Spelling Bee in Guam scheduled for March and may get the chance to compete in the national tilt where 53 student representatives from various U.S. states will vie for the title.

Masrur, the youngest son of Touhida and Manzurul Alam, bested opponents in the third through sixth grades during the final round.

He amazed the crowd by responding correctly to all 38 words given by the contest facilitators.

His winning word was "sitology," a word he admitted confused him at the last minute.

Last December, Alam also emerged champion in the schoolwide Geography Bee and had taken written examinations to qualify for the national contest. Approximately $25,000 in scholarship grants can be won in the competition.

WSR conducted the contest preliminary round in September and thereafter held the semifinal rounds until four finalists were selected for the championship round on Tuesday.

"I feel really good about it," he told *Saipan Tribune* moments after he was proclaimed the victor.

The school will send three official representatives to the Guam spelling contest. One of them is Mobtasim Alam, Masrur's oldest brother and third place winner in Tuesday's competition.

Masrur was in the Guam spelling tilt in 2007 while Mobtasim was in the same Guam competition last year after winning the schoolwide championship round.

"This time, I will be more prepared," Masrur said, adding that he will immediately start his review for the contest.

Masrur said he is confident that he can do better this year in both spelling and geography bee contests.

"Every year is a good experience," he said, citing the assistance and support of his family in all his school activities.

Manzurul Alam, Masrur's father, vowed to continue to "inspire, encourage and support" his sons' education.

"We're so blessed that we have sons like them who are serious and dedicated in their education. We will continue to support them," he said.

ROSELYN MONROYO

Ten-year-old Masrur S. Alam, front right, is joined by his older brother, Mobtasim Alam, and their parents Touhida and Manzurul Alam moments after winning the William S. Reyes Elementary School spelling bee competition on Tuesday.

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Fitial sets meeting on pension fund woes

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial will meet with lawmakers and officials of the NMI Retirement Fund next week to address the pension program's depleting resources.

Fund board chair Juan T. Guerrero earlier said the pension program may be wiped out in three to five years if the government's $209 million debt remains unpaid and the global financial crisis continues.

Press Secretary Charles Reyes said yesterday the governor looks forward to addressing these issues collaboratively.

"He supports a number of legislative reforms endorsed by the Fund, some of which have already been introduced in the Legislature," said Reyes.

In fiscal year 2007, the Fund spent $76.894 million, including over $51 million in pensions; $5 million to survivors of retirees; $1.9 million in disability benefits and $4.451 in administrative costs.

The governor has expressed support for an initiative to issue a pension obligation bond to help stabilize the Fund's financial health.

The Retirement Fund's other proposed solutions are the passage of bills and initiatives shielding the Fund from political tampering to ensure its continued viability; prohibit the Legislature from increasing benefits until all obligations of the Fund have been fully paid; limit the class of people able to double dip; and allow the Fund to file for bankruptcy.

The Fund also proposes statutory amendments, including a stop on all disability benefits, and soft freeze on benefits accrual at 20 years. ***(Haidee V. Eugenio)***

EMO warns of hazardous seas in advisory

A trade wind surge is expected to generate combined seas of 10 feet or more through today, prompting the Emergency Management Office to issue a small craft advisory for hazardous seas.

While winds have diminished to 15-20 knots yesterday morning, EMO said that seas will remain near 10 feet through at least early Saturday.

The EMO is strongly advising the public—especially beachgoers, fishermen, tourists, swimmers, divers, and surfers—to avoid venturing near exposed reefs and beaches. The agency advised people to specially avoid areas along north- and west-facing reefs as rip current are life threatening.

Based on the information received from National Weather Service in Tiyan, Guam, and compiled at the CNMI EMO, today's east wind will be 15-20 knots and wind waves 5-7 feet with east swell at 6 feet. East winds tonight, meanwhile, will be 15-20 knots and wind waves 5-7 feet with east swell at 7 feet. Thursday east winds are 15-20 knots, wind waves 4-6 feet, and east swell 8 feet. ***(EMO)***

Fiji military leader rejects election ultimatum

SUVA, Fiji (AP)—Fiji's military ruler on Wednesday refused to buckle to demands that he hold democratic elections this year, saying he would stick to his own timetable even if it meant facing sanctions.

Commodore Frank Bainimarama also suggested that the leaders of the 16-member Pacific Island Forum who threatened to suspend Fiji from their bloc, which could mean losing aid money, that they had no right to do so.

"I have never come across a situation where a country gives an ultimatum to another country unless, of course, there is a declaration of war," Bainimarama told New Zealand's Radio Tarana on Wednesday.

There is no threat of violence by either side, but developments in the past two days have sharply increased tensions between Fiji and its neighbors as they try to force the military from power more than two years after a coup.

At a meeting in Papua New Guinea on Tuesday, forum leaders demanded Fiji's military regime hold elections by the end of the year or the country would be suspended from the regional grouping, which could block Fiji's access to aid money.

The leaders said Bainimarama must set the election date by May 1, and the military must promise to stay out of politics.

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP09-CHC-048

SUBMISSION: MARCH 03, 2009 • TIME: 3:00 P.M.

"OUTSIDE GROUND MAINTENANCE SERVICES FOR THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTH CENTER"

COPIES OF THE SCOPE OF WORK MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY IN LOWERBASE, SAIPAN DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO **MR. TOMAS S. PALACIOS, MANAGER OF GENERAL SUPPORT SERVICES** BY FAX TO (670) 234-8930 OR E-MAILED TO tspalacios@gmail.com NO LATER THAN **FEBRUARY 19, 2009 CLOSE OFBUSINESS.**

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO US CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE PROPOSAL IF PREFERECED IS CLAIMED.

/s/ **JOSEPH K.P. VILLAGOMEZ**
Secretary of Health

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
Director, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP09-DOC-044

SUBMISSION: FEBRUARY 19, 2009 • TIME: 4:00 P.M.

"FACILITATING AND DEVELOPING A MILITARY STRATEGIC PLANNING DOCUMENT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE-COMMONWEALTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY COMMISSION"

THE RFP PACKAGE MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY IN LOWERBASE, SAIPAN DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP MUST BE SUBMITTED IN WRITING TO MR. MICHAEL ADA, SECRETARY OF COMMERCE VIA E-MAIL TO depcommerce.ada@gmail.com OR FAX TO (670) 664-3067 NO LATER THAN 4:30 P.M., LOCAL TIME, FEBRUARY 09, 2009.

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO US CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE PROPOSAL IF PREFERECED IS CLAIMED.

/s/ **MICHAEL ADA**
SECRETARY OF COMMERCE

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
Director, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP09-SOF-051

SUBMISSION: FEBRUARY 27, 2009 • TIME: 3:30 P.M.

"TO LEASE / DEVELOP / REVITALIZE LA FIESTA PROPERTY"

The Office of the Governor, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, through the Secretary of Finance, is soliciting proposals from interested individuals, businesses, investors and project developers, for the lease, redevelopment and revitalization of the La Fiesta Property, including upgrading and renovating all existing facilities, within the commercial complex across from Palms Resort in San Roque, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

A copy of the specification may be obtained at the Office of the Director of Procurement and Supply in Lower Base, Saipan during regular working hours. Preference is available to U.S. Citizens or Permanent Residents as per Public Law 15-95 and as further amended by Public Law 15-118 and must be submitted with the proposal if preference is claimed.

For information regarding the technical description of the La Fiesta Property, including existing leases on the property, please contact the Secretary of Finance at (670) 664-1100 or write to P.O. Box 5234, CHRB, Saipan MP 96950.

/s/ **ELOY S. INOS**
Secretary of Finance

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
Director, P&S

ROTA CASINO GAMING COMMISSION (RCGC)
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
P.O. Box 1547 ROTA, MP 96951

PURSUANT TO THE OPEN GOVERNMENT ACT, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSION, DIEGO M. SONGAO HEREBY ANNOUNCES THAT THE ROTA CASINO GAMING COMMISSION'S REGULAR MEETING FOR FRIDAY, JANUARY 30, 2009.

DATE: **Friday, January 30, 2009**
TIME: **3:00 PM**
LOCATION: **Rota Casino Gaming Commission's Office**
Public Library Annex Building, Tatachog, Rota

AGENDA

I. Call to Order
II. Roll Call
III. Adoption of Agenda
IV. Adoption of Minutes
V. Chairman's Report
VI. Old Business
1. Rules and Regulations
2. Technical Amendments

VII. New Business
1. RCGC Official Seal
2. Revised Budget
3. Website Development
4. Personnel Development
5. RCGC Bank Account
6. Investment Guide
7. RLD $20,000.00 Budget for RCGC

VIII. Miscellaneous
IX. Adjournment

*At anytime during the meeting, the Commission may move to Executive Session.

DIEGO M. SONGAO
Chairman

January 22, 2009

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

January 29, 1999

NMC in fund mess

Finance officials may have to juggle the shrinking public funds to squeeze in additional $575,000 needed by the Northern Marianas College for some 500 students under a scholarship program which drew flak at the start of a House oversight hearing yesterday. The chair of the House committee on Health, Education and Welfare which is conducting a series of hearings on NMC, asked the finance department to look into the $488,000 recently appropriated by the Saipan delegation in a bid to boost its financial aid program granted to on-island students. The money will cover shortfall in the scholarship funds for this spring semester, including tuition and books, for 530 NMC students who have protested what they claim as government's neglect and apparent special preference to off-island students.

Business leader backs 3-year stay limit

Claiming that this is the only way to stave off federalization of minimum wage and immigration, Saipan Chamber of Commerce president Kerry M. Deets yesterday said she now favors the imposition of a three-year limit on the stay of non-resident workers. In an apparent change of heart, Deets urged the Chamber members to reexamine their position so that they can help the CNMI government in making a decision on whether they would allow the Northern Marianas to be dependent on non-resident workers. "We have a very important social decision to make. Are we going to focus on objecting a three-year limit locally because it saves us a few dollars or should we work on a long term goal by being more concerned with staving off a federal takeover," said Deets.

January 29, 2001

CPA draws out plans to save direct flights

Discussions are now underway between major government agencies to facilitate ways that may help save direct flights between Saipan and two major areas in Asia which the Commonwealth may permanently lose. Executive Director Carlos H. Salas disclosed the Commonwealth Ports Authority has been in coordination with the Marianas Visitors Authority since reports on the possible pullout of Mandarin Airlines surfaced earlier this month. According to Mr. Salas, the discussion, which also involves the Air Service Committee of the Strategic Economic Development Council, was launched to explore possible means that would help Mandarin Airlines continue with its deployment of flights between Saipan and Taipei.

Court rules out Repeki acquittal

Superior Court Associate Judge Timothy H. Bellas threw out the plea of convicted felon Eugene B. Repeki Jr. for a judgment of acquittal on the murder of Filipino security guard Cesario B. Valerio on May 4, 1999. A jury ruled on Dec. 14, 2000 that Mr. Repeki was guilty of second degree murder . His alleged co-conspirators, Anthony Magofna and Thomas Ch. Basa, stand to undergo the same trial this year. However, Mr. Repeki claimed that the evidence presented during the trail failed to sustain the verdict as the evidence shows that his acts did not cause the injury which led to the death of Mr. Valerio.

January 29, 2002

Warner Bros. Studio Store closing down

The Warner Bros. Studio Store at the DFS Galleria will permanently pull its shutters down next month, an apparent indication of slow business in the Northern Marianas. Store personnel said the clearance sale, which started in December 2001, was aimed at dispatching as many stocks as possible to at least recoup some investments. Majority of the signature items on the retail store's shelves are on sale at discounted rates that range from 30 percent to 70 percent. Items that are on big sale include apparel products, key chains, and toys. The clearance sale, billed as Winter Clothes Clearance Sale, will run until next month. The retail store is schedule to close down in the latter part of February.

BB submits comprehensive campaign kitty statement

Gov. Juan N. Babauta and Lt. Gov. Diego T. Benavente's campaign kitty is bigger than what was reported as the GOP tandem failed to disclose the full amount of all in-kind contributions they received during the primary and general elections campaign period. Records released yesterday by the CNMI Commission on Elections disclosed that apart from the $155,268.15 donations received from numerous fundraising events and over $63,000 cash donations, the BB tandem received cases of beer, soda, bottles of water, spareribs, chicken and other contributions from its supporters during the campaign season. The 122-page financial statement submitted by Babauta and Benavente, which was compiled and audited by party treasurer Carmen C. Reyes, include campaign activities in Saipan, Rota, Tinian, Guam and Hawaii.

NMC IT staff earn nationally-recognized network certification

Three staff members from the Northern Marianas College recently received their nationally-recognized certification for installing, configuring, and operating enterprise computer networks.

Information Technology director Adrian Atalig, system administrator Eric Abragan, and IT Computer Lab supervisor Greg Quitugua earned their certification by passing the Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA) exam in Guam.

"Everyone at the college is extremely proud of their accomplishment," said NMC president Dr. Carmen Fernandez. "Their certification not only enhances the services we provide to our students, but also places the college closer to becoming the education and technology leader in the region."

The CCNA exam tests a candidate's knowledge and skills required to install, operate, and troubleshoot an enterprise branch network. It includes questions about implementing network security; network media; IP addressing; WAN technologies; operating and configuring IOS devices; managing IP traffic with access lists; establishing point-to-point connections; and establishing Frame Relay connections.

The industry-recognized certification ensures that the NMC IT staff members possess the requisite knowledge and skill necessary to install and configure Cisco switches and routers in local and wide-area networks using various platforms. The certification also helps validate the ability to mitigate security threats to NMC's computer network.

The certification exam was preceded by a weeklong Cisco Boot Camp training session held at the college last December.

"Expanding our administrative capacities through training opportunities and certifications like these have a direct benefit on students and NMC employees" said Atalig. "At a minimum, a new and improved network infrastructure will provide them with a reliable, secure, and robust high speed computer network."

"The whole experience from participating in the training sessions to passing the certification exam was intense but highly rewarding," said Abragan. "Through it all the staff and management have been highly supportive of our efforts." ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

NMC President Dr. Carmen Fernandez, second from left, holds up one of the computer network certification certificates recently earned by NMC IT staff. Those who earned the certificates include, from left, systems administrator Eric Abragan, IT Computer Lab supervisor Greg Quitugua, and IT director Adrian Atalig.

LION DANCE

Members of the Chinese Association of Saipan perform a traditional lion dance at the Hyatt Regency Saipan in Garapan as part of the Chinese New Year celebration on Monday, Jan. 26.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Two members of the Chinese Association of Saipan perform a traditional lion dance at the Hyatt Regency Saipan as other members look on. The performance is supposed to bring good luck in the new year.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

MAJOR LEAGUE SUPPORT

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Floor Leader Joseph Camacho and Rep. Justo Quitugua present a certificate of appreciation to Sablan Topline Cleaning Agency for their support and generosity in the sponsorship of the 2008 Tanapag Falcons Big League Team. Agnes Ada and Cathy Pangelinan received the certificate, along with the trophies for the 2008 pennant championship and 2008 first runner-up on behalf of the Sablan Topline Cleaning Agency. Camacho and Quitugua also acknowledged and commended all individuals and businesses who have contributed to worthwhile activities for the youth and community.

SPIN!

A man removes his clothes from a dryer at a laundromat in San Vicente. Despite a recent drop in prices of liquefied petroleum gas products which fuel dryers, consumers won't see a decrease in the cost of washing and drying their clothes in laundromats.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

NEW COUPLE

Congratulations to newly married couple Manuel and Janice Bodadilla. The two held their wedding reception at the Shirley's Coffee Shop on Dec. 30, 2008.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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EDITORIAL

The world reacts

Global reaction to Barack Obama's inauguration suggested that Obamamania is still very much alive in many parts of the world—but that resistance to his leadership is already emerging. That's true not just of predictable U.S. adversaries such as Venezuela's Hugo Chavez (who said he had detected Mr. Obama's "stench") but of allies who claim to be delighted with the transition. The day after the president's swearing-in, France's defense minister appeared to rule out sending additional troops to Afghanistan. German Chancellor Angela Merkel rather sourly wished for broad international agreement on the principle that "no single country can solve the problems of the world."

China's state media censored Mr. Obama's inaugural address, eliminating his reference to states that suppress dissent. A prominent Saudi prince, Turki al-Faisal, declared in Britain's Financial Times that if the United States wants to preserve its strategic relationship with Saudi Arabia, "it will have to drastically revise its policies vis-a-vis Israel and Palestine." In Israel itself, senior officials, including Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, have expressed unease about Mr. Obama's plan to open a dialogue with Iran.

In Europe and elsewhere, there is a disconnect between Mr. Obama's popularity and receptiveness to his likely policies. At least three-quarters of people surveyed by the Financial Times in Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Spain (including 93 percent in France) believe that the new president will have "a positive impact on international relations." But majorities in all of those countries except Spain oppose sending more troops to Afghanistan. Just 13 percent of Germans and fewer than 10 percent of French believe that fighting terrorism should be Mr. Obama's top priority—compared with 45 percent of Americans.

Mr. Obama won plaudits from Paris and many other capitals by ordering the closure of the prison in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. But obtaining cooperation with American priorities—not just more troops for Afghanistan but tougher European sanctions against Iran, Arab help in containing Hamas and Hezbollah, or Israeli concessions to Palestinians—will require converting some of his rock-star capital into more pragmatic goodwill. He should explain soon that an improved relationship with the United States cannot be founded entirely on the reversal of unpopular Bush administration policies. And he might try appealing over the heads of a few recalcitrant governments. After all, the polls show that Mr. Obama is more popular than most European and Latin American leaders are in their own countries.

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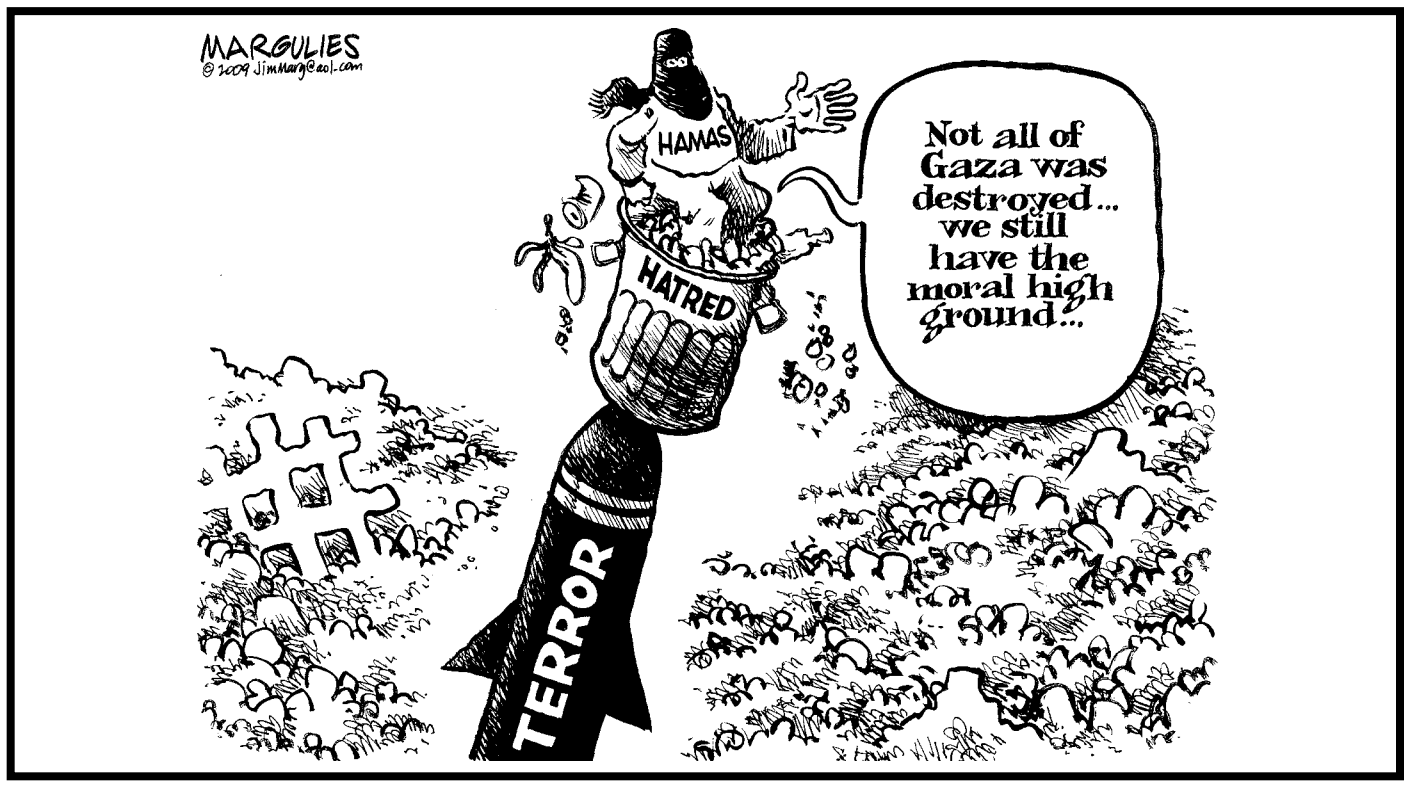


'Selected' problems, events impacting NMI retirees

Conclusion

By WILLIAM H. STEWART
Special to the Saipan Tribune

William H. Stewart is an economist, historian and military cartographer.

If you are a CNMI retiree or a government employee expecting to retire in the coming years you would do well to get up to speed in understanding a little about your future financial security and the forces working against you.

In this regard, I shall address two different NMI retirement plans. One is the plan of which the majority of NMI members have remained and that's the Fund's defined benefit plan, DBP.

The other is the plan that a group of 470 former members who voluntarily opted out of the benefit plan when solicited to do so by the central government to join the defined contribution plan, DCP. To this group there are 686 new hires who did not have the option of choice between the two plans and who could only participate in the new defined contribution plan after the government froze any additional new membership participation in the benefit plan after April 2007. Confused? Don't be. Hopefully, the following will assist in understanding the difference between the two.

Think of the defined contribution plan as consisting of your assuming the responsibility for your own future retirement based largely upon your ability to invest your money wisely in any number of investment possibilities in any amount one chooses. A few might be the stock market, real estate, U.S. Treasury notes, your local bank's passbook savings account or an IRA or 401(k) account, or whatever. If you invest in, for example, a 401(k) account the NMI government will contribute 4 cents for every dollar you invest. You also accept the risk associated with all your investment decisions. Therefore, you should become well aware of such risks and possess a measure of investment knowledge.

'It may soon be time to start thinking about reducing individual pensions in order to 'stretch out' payments.'

Economist Ben Stien, a former member of President Nixon's staff, had an interesting televised discussion recently on the condition of retirement plans in the United States and in particular the defined contribution plans. Stein pointed out that in planning for retirement, a 30-year-old individual hoping to retire at age 65 with the same relative standard of living enjoyed at age 30 must start now to save somewhere between 30 to 35 percent (if not more) of his or her income in a contribution plan hopefully structured to achieve the living standard maintained prior to the "savings set-aside." By the way, a 30-year-old male in 2009 under normal circumstances could expect to live another 46.2 years or until the year 2055.

In other words, the individual must lower their present disposable income expenditures (their consumption) through the process of saving, of which the net result for many will require lowering their present standard of living to accommodate the lower disposal income available for their discretionary purchases.

Many 401(k) investors aren't aware of the fees and costs charged by the managers of 401(k) plans (usually mutual fund firms). These fees and costs compound over time and eat up a huge chunk of the employee's investment returns. John C. Bogle, founder of the Vanguard mutual fund firm, says that "over several decades, this adds up to 80 percent of returns going to the system's managers, only 20 percent to the investor." Think about that!

Some studies have suggested that half the people with 401(k)s cash them out when they change jobs, despite the tax penalties for doing so.

Under the Federal Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA), the federal government does not insure defined contribution plans such as 401(k)s.

Those interested in the above can read more on the subject at http://finance.yahoo.com/columnist/archives/headlines/yourlife/2006/1 or visit the *Saipan Tribune* archives for Dec. 14 and 15, 2006, for an article titled, "Planning for Retirement" and also the article which appeared in the May 12, 2008, issue of the *Tribune* (see archives) titled: "W.Va. Teachers Hope to Return to Defined Benefit Retirement Plan."

This piece concerned a group of West Virginia teachers who had once participated in that State's defined benefit plan and who were convinced by the State to convert to a defined contribution plan. After doing so they became dissatisfied with the contribution plan—and petitioned the W.Va. Legislature to return to the benefit plan and were eventually permitted to so.

I couldn't help but wonder if this might be a harbinger for the NMI government's defined contribution retirement plan sometime in the future. Many of the West Virginia teachers apparently felt that the required monitoring of their own retirement investment in a contribution plan was more difficult and involved than previously thought. They recognized the need for rather sophisticated (and timely) knowledge of the stock market, their 401(k)'s, IRA's and other investments. For more information Google "stock market risks and rewards."

As the chief investment economist for J.& W. Seligman, Douglas Peta observed, "We know there is a lot of paper out there that we can't trust. We don't know exactly who owns it and how much. And we don't know how they are valuing it." A sobering statement. It comes down to a simple truth of not knowing who or what investment opportunities to believe.

Apparently, West Virginia lawmakers provided for the voluntary "switch back over" (return back to the benefit plan) after fielding complaints that Time Certificates of Deposits weren't yielding enough returns for retirement" (from contribution plans). Blame ranged from negligent oversight by individual enrollees (in the defined contribution plan) and shoddy advice from W.Va. state-hired consultants, to the inherent risks of playing the stock market.

A brief examination of the NMI's defined benefit plan reveals there were 7,266 remaining members as of October 2007. Under

See SELECTED on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, Century Insurance Building, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Attracting more tourists

By RIK and JANEL VILLEGAS
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Rik is a business instructor at NMC and Janel is a partner with BizResults, LLC (www.bizresults.org). They can be contacted at biz_results@yahoo.com.

A meeting was recently held with nine business owners, managers, and concerned individuals in the community to brainstorm ideas that would attract more tourists to visit Saipan. Tourism once played second fiddle to garment factories as a source of government revenue, but in the last three years it has taken center stage as the sole industry to help stave further economic hemorrhaging.

Each of the ideas were then evaluated and prioritized. It was agreed that we can't wait for the government to take charge, and that if any of these ideas are to be implemented it would come from investors and entrepreneurs who could see the possibilities. Here are the ideas, listed according to their ranking:

■ Build a convention center to encourage more business and group conventions.

■ Encourage more athletic events that take advantage of our warm weather.

■ Take advantage of the Marine Monument advertising to promote events in the CNMI.

■ Set up natural, extreme rides – for example, long zip lines in the ocean, rolling balls with people in them.

■ Zone areas on island that would be exempt from Article 12 to promote commercial development and attract new businesses and tourism.

■ Promote the CNMI as a "green" alternative power island. Tie in with monument and gateway to the Marianas Trench

■ More comparative advertising that shows Saipan is closer to visit.

■ Legalize casino gambling on Saipan.

■ Encourage more privately owned, public transportation so tourists can easily go to stores and attractions.

■ Have a children's park and store for kids.

■ Have a shark cage diving business that attracts adventurous visitors.

■ Identify and promote to a new market to replace the Chinese (30K) and Russians (10K) in numbers and spending.

■ Many international women are having their babies in the CNMI, so build exotic or unique birthing centers to attract pregnant international women.

■ In all MVA promotions, highlight the "most consistent temperature in the world" and "deepest water on the planet."

■ Also emphasize the "highest mountain on the planet from the ocean bottom."

■ Start a surf school for the Asian market. East swells are great here. Build a fake reef that will form a perfect wave.

■ Promote medical vacation tourism.

■ Promote more educational tourism in the CNMI. Have schools that attract more elementary to high school students, and assist NMC to attract more international students.

■ Charter a cruise ship that goes to all the Micronesian islands.

■ Have more brand name stores or products. Also, local crafts should be priced reasonably.

■ Provide incentive programs (added value) to tourists visiting the CNMI.

■ Get Michael Jackson, Paris Hilton, or some washed-up singer who is popular in Asian to move here and hold concerts.

■ We need a K-Mart or Wal-Mart store.

■ Have condominiums or housing to attract baby boomer tourists who want to get away from the cold weather for several months of the year.

■ Provide better public transportation.

■ Focus attractions on indigenous resources.

■ Subsidize flights to Saipan.

As you can see, some of the ideas would cost hundreds of millions of dollars, while others are less expensive. A cost-benefit analysis would help identify the most viable options to pursue. The best ideas could then be discussed further and developed so that they could be implemented.

Hopefully, there are some ideas that would attract an investor with deep pockets, and who could take advantage of the many opportunities that are still available in the CNMI. If you have some other ideas or would like to discuss these ideas further, you can visit www.bizresults.blogspot.com to make any comments.

New fortunes for 21st-century cookies

By GREGORY RODRIGUEZ
SPECIAL TO THE LOS ANGELES TIMES

LOS ANGELES—My buddy Kenny Yee wants to be the Barack Obama of the Chinese food industry—purveying fortune cookies you can believe in.

Last week, in anticipation of the Chinese New Year of the Ox (which was Monday), I sat down with Yee and friends, got hopped up on tea and started the grueling process of figuring out the ingredients of a good contemporary fortune.

The last time I wrote about Kenny, he was presiding over the Miss Chinatown pageant and running his family's noodle business. But in March , he struck out on his own and bought one of Los Angeles' four Chinese fortune-cookie factories.

I hate to break it to you if you don't know, but fortune cookies aren't from China. Depending on which story you believe, they were invented in Los Angeles by a Chinese-born noodle manufacturer or in San Francisco by a Japanese immigrant who tended the Japanese Tea Garden in Golden Gate Park. Either way, they're a California invention that dates to before World War I—classical Californiana.

Despite this august history and their ubiquity in the American Chinese food business, fortune cookies don't get a lot of respect. I would bet that it's been a while since cracking one open made you ponder your future, your place in the universe or even made you smile. It's not that the notion has lost its novelty. (And God knows, the cookies themselves—little folded pancakes of sugar, flour and eggs—never get really stale.) Even if it's been a while since you've had a fortune any better than, "You have a good head for matters of money," you probably can't resist opening the next one that arrives with your check at your favorite Chinese restaurant. We all hope for signs of good fortune.

But for years now, it's been the diners who have been bringing a smile to the fortune cookie rather than the other way around. When I was a kid, after a Chinese meal my father never failed to pretend that his fortune read, "Help, I'm trapped in a Chinese fortune cookie factory!"

At some point in the past few decades, to spice up the fortune-cookie experience, teenagers started to add phrases like "in bed" to the end of their cookie fortunes. "You will attend an unusual party—in bed." "Rome was not built in a day. Be patient—in bed." You get the point.

When Kenny bought his fortune-cookie company, he inherited an inventory of roughly 100,000 little pearls of wisdom. And many of them, he thought, were out of date, irrelevant, a lost opportunity—bad for business, worse for karma.

"With this cookie," he told me, brandishing a folded, stuffed example, "I've got five seconds of face time with someone. I don't want them to just chuck the paper aside. I want to make fortunes that inspire people, that have spark, that make them laugh or want to be or want something they don't have."

That's a tall order for a little cookie, but, in hard times, people do look for signs that their luck is going to shift. This past (solar) New Year's Eve, I took it as a good omen that I had the rare chance to see Venus, Jupiter and Mercury in the western sky just after sunset. I would be only too thrilled to open a fortune cookie that told me that economic recovery was somewhere around the corner. Magical thinking, I know, but I still would stick it in my wallet.

It's not easy coming up with fortunes for this secular, cynical age, and maybe I wasn't the right guy to try. My favorite prospects were more sarcastic than they were inspirational, and some of them had an implied "or else" at the end.

In a nod to Bob Barker, I came up with, "Please spay and neuter your pets." And trying to capture the green zeitgeist, I suggested, "Reduce your carbon imprint. Recycle this fortune." But I don't think this is what Kenny had in mind.

It wasn't until I was driving home from Chinatown that it struck me how universal our task really was. We've all pretty much got five seconds of face time with people we encounter. We would be, well, fortunate if we could figure out how to inspire them to be more hopeful about tomorrow.

Rodriguez is director of the California Fellows Program at the New America Foundation and author of Mongrels, Bastards, Orphans and Vagabonds: Mexican Immigration and the Future of Race in America. *E-mail him at grodriguez@latimescolumnists.com.*

Free DPL from land compensation program

This time I have to agree with John Del Rosario assertion that House Bill 16-206 is unconstitutional. If the bill becomes law, it will take away the Department of Public Land's autonomous status guaranteed by CNMI constitution even if DPL is under the Executive Branch through an Executive Order. By all means, DPL must be protected from any intrusion in its independent affairs and be respected for its rank within the government. Even if the local or federal courts disagree, DPL must utilize every resource available to it to protect its sovereignty.

The Legislature should abolish the land compensation program and free DPL from any responsibilities and associations thereof, because it must concentrate only on homestead programs in compliance with the Constitution. Should the Legislature decides to continue the land compensation program, it will be smart to create another governmental agency or department to oversee it because DPL should not be overburdened with civil matters but essential public services only, such as the homestead program.

Unfortunately, the Legislature must find a balance between the interest of the public and the interest of the private landowners requiring land compensation, but the answer must not lie on DPL's shoulder. Instead, the Legislature must find the solution to this problem away from DPL's corridors since this is not a fundamental agenda of DPL's activities.

Furthermore, the Legislature must lighten the responsibilities of the Secretary of DPL to be consistent with its responsibilities. Consequently, the pay scale must commensurate with the responsibilities. Since DPL will no longer administer the dreadful and cumbersome land compensation program—assuming the Governor vetoed House Bill 16-206—the Secretary's pay must be reduced. I think Mr. Del Rosario will certainly agree with me.

Enrique K. Seman
Kagman, Saipan

SELECTED

From Page 10

this plan the participant contributes a portion of his or her salary to the Fund's defined benefit plan and the central government by law is required to make an employer's contribution to the employee member's account. The Fund then assumes the fiduciary responsibility of investing and managing the employee's money and upon becoming eligible to retire, the member receives a pension for the rest of his or her life presumably guaranteed by the government.

Of course, both plans are more complicated than I have summarized but the above should give the interested reader an idea of the differences between the two different plans.

Some retirees who contact me about the dire circumstances and the government's neglect remind me of what my dear sweet granny once said, "They're as nervous as a long tailed cat on a porch full of rocking chairs."

At a time of grave economic uncertainty witnessed by declining values, reduced employment opportunities and loss of confidence in many of our institutions—all the while prices continue to rise. It has been insinuated by some who are more acquainted with the condition of the Fund than I that if some relief isn't forthcoming from the central government the Fund may run out of money to pay pensions in 3-5 years. A very sobering projection.

If so, it may soon be time to start thinking about reducing individual pensions in order to "stretch out" payments—even in reduced amounts over a longer period than the projected 3 to 5 year span. It boils down to "better something than nothing." Should it ever come to that unpleasant action all that would remain would be the question by what percentage should be applied to the across-the-board reduction? Please note that the scenario is mine alone and in no way reflects the current thinking of the Fund's board of trustees.

As shocking as the possibility of pension reductions may be, the question must be posed: How far must the Fund's investment base be depleted as a result of the central government's nonpayment of its obligations, which has had the disastrous effect of requiring the Fund to "cash-in" investments to pay pensions? Something that should never have been necessary.

Meanwhile, as I mentioned previously, the government's failure to pay its debt of $165 million, which continues to increase as time goes by month after month, has resulted in the Fund filing a lawsuit against the central government. The status hearing for this action is scheduled for Feb. 13 in the Superior Court.

Editor's Note: For other essays by the author concerning the Retirement Fund from the point of view of an economist visit the Saipan Tribune*'s archives.*

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲86° ▼76°	▲86° ▼78°	▲86° ▼78°	▲86° ▼77°	▲86° ▼77°

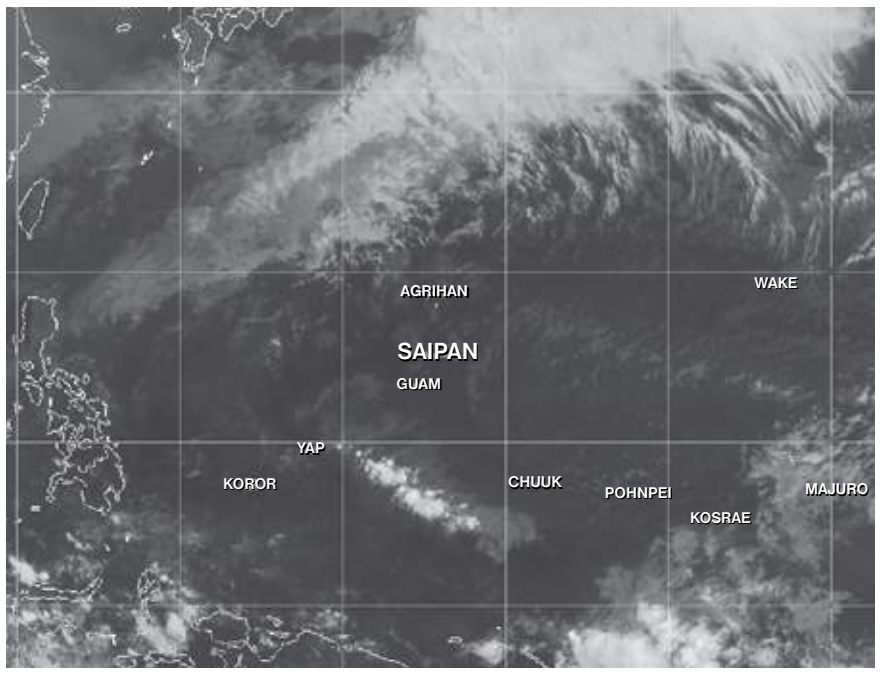
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Cloudy	▲83	▼75
Palau	Rain	▲87	▼77
Yap	Showers	▲89	▼77
Chuuk	Showers	▲90	▼78
Pohnpei	Showers	▲85	▼77
Kosrae	Showers	▲88	▼77
Majuro	Showers	▲84	▼78

Around The Globe

Auckland	Mostly Sunny	▲73	▼64
Beijing	Cloudy	▲41	▼23
Hong Kong	Partly Sunny	▲72	▼57
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	▲76	▼70
London	Cloudy	▲41	▼36
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲77	▼52
Manila	Showers	▲87	▼74
Melbourne	Hot	▲100	▼82
Miami	Mostly Sunny	▲82	▼66
New York	Partly Sunny	▲38	▼24
Osaka	Showers	▲56	▼50
Paris	Partly Sunny	▲43	▼30
Pusan	Cloudy	▲50	▼48
Rome	Mostly Sunny	▲51	▼38
Salem	Partly Sunny	▲48	▼32
San Francisco	Sunny	▲63	▼45
Seoul	Cloudy	▲49	▼32
Tokyo	Showers	▲50	▼41
Washington, DC	Partly Sunny	▲39	▼27

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, WEDNESDAY, JAN. 28, 2009
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A shear line enters the discussion area at 25N145E and extends southwestward to beyond 130E at 18N. Extensive cloud cover and scattered showers are found along and up to 300 miles northwest of the shear line. Convergence along a trade wind surge located south of the Marianas is generating scattered showers and a few thunderstorms within 50 miles of a line from 10N139E to 4N148E. A weak trade-wind disturbance is producing scattered showers over Kwajalein between 10N and 7N from 166E to 170E.

Tides

Saipan Harbor		
3:28 AM Today	Low Tide:	0.2 Feet
10:06 AM Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet
4:05 PM Today	Low Tide:	0.9 Feet
9:11 PM Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:47 AM	6:14 PM
Friday	6:47 AM	6:14 PM
Saturday	6:46 AM	6:15 PM
Sunday	6:46 AM	6:15 PM
Monday	6:46 AM	6:16 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	8:27 AM	8:37 PM
Friday	9:03 AM	9:26 PM
Saturday	9:39 AM	10:17 PM
Sunday	10:18 AM	11:10 PM
Monday	10:59 AM	

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- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
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  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

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- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 1, 2009

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Rota			
CO9597	11:50am	12:25pm	1,7
Saipan-Guam			
CO9317	5:00am	5:50am	Daily
CO9313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
CO9597	11:50am	1:20pm	1,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	2,3,4,5,6
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Narita			
NW 099	5:00am	7:35am	Daily
NW 078	8:20am	1:30pm	2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 075	4:55pm	7:30pm	Daily
Guam-Narita			
NW 73	4:10pm	7:00pm	Daily
NW 81	3:55pm	6:55pm	Daily
Saipan-Osaka			
OZ 119	4:00am	6:40am	1,4,6
NW 083	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
Guam-Osaka			
NW 79	4:45pm	7:35pm	Daily
Saipan-Nagoya			
NW 078	8:20am	11:05am	Daily
Guam-Nagoya			
NW 23	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Incheon			
OZ 604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:40am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 119	4:00am	11:25am	1,4,6 via Osaka
OZ 606	3:20pm	7:00pm	Daily
Saipan-Busan			
OZ 608	3:20am	6:50am	1,4,5,7
Saipan-Shanghai			
FM 844	2:50am	5:40am	2,6
Rota-Guam			
CO 9597	12:50pm	1:20pm	1,7
Guam-Palau			
CO 953	7:40pm	8:40pm	1,7
CO 893	5:50pm	6:50pm	3,5
Palau-Manila			
CO 893	7:35pm	9:10pm	3,5
Guam-Manila			
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	3,5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm	9:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:50am	1,2,4,6,7
Nagoya-Manila			
NW 71	8:40pm	11:55pm	Daily
Incheon-Hongkong			
OZ 721	9:20am	12:00pm	Daily
OZ 723	7:45pm	10:35pm	Daily
OZ 7173	8:00pm	10:50pm	5,7
Narita-Manila			
NW 1	7:00pm	10:55pm	Daily

ARRIVALS

Rota-Saipan			
CO 9598	3:25am	4:00am	5,6
Guam-Saipan			
CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	1,2,3,4,7
CO9598	2:30am	4:00am	5,6 via Rota
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9600	10:20am	11:10am	Daily
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily
Narita-Saipan			
NW 076	10:15am	2:40pm	Daily
NW 077	6:25pm	1:20am+1	2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 100	8:45pm	1:10am+1	Daily
Narita-Guam			
NW 74	9:45am	2:20pm	Daily
NW 82	10:30am	3:10pm	Daily
Osaka-Saipan			
OZ 120	9:50pm	2:20am+1	3,5,7
NW 084	10:40am	3:05pm	Daily
Osaka-Guam			
NW 80	10:30am	3:00pm	Daily
Nagoya-Saipan			
NW 077	9:00pm	1:20am+1	Daily
Nagoya-Guam			
NW 24	10:00am	2:30pm	Daily
Incheon-Saipan			
OZ 605	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
OZ 603	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ 120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	3,5,7 via Osaka
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6
Busan-Saipan			
OZ 607	9:00pm	2:10am+1	3,4,6,7
Shanghai-Saipan			
FM 843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1,5
Guam-Rota			
CO 9598	2:30am	3:00am	5,6
Palau-Guam			
CO 954	2:30am	5:25am	1,2
CO 892	2:35am	5:30am	4,6
Manila-Palau			
CO 892	10:10pm	1:50am+1	3,5
Manila-Guam			
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	3,5 via Koror
CO 934	11:10pm	4:40am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:10pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7
Manila-Nagoya			
NW 72	6:30am	11:05am	Daily
Hongkong-Incheon			
OZ 724	12:30am	4:50am	Daily
OZ 7183	12:45am	5:05am	1,4,6
OZ 722	1:30pm	5:45pm	Daily
Manila-Narita			
NW 2	7:45am	12:40pm	Daily

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Business

STOCK Portfolio

ASIAN MARKETS

AUSTRALIA
3,435.100
Up 42.800
(1.26%)

HONG KONG
12,578.60
Down 79.39
(-0.63%)

JAKARTA
1,327.789
Down 8.842
(-0.66%)

TOKYO
8,120.81
Up 59.74
(0.74%)

K. LUMPUR
872.69
Down 6.33
(-0.72%)

MANILA
1,996.04
Down 1.79
(-0.09%)

SINGAPORE
1,747.45
Up 62.22
(3.69%)

SEOUL
1,157.65
Up 64.25
(5.88%)

BANGKOK
442.57
Down 2.22
(-0.50%)

LEADING INDICATORS

DOW
8,174.73
58.70

NASDAQ
1,504.90
15.44

S&P
845.71
9.14

MONEY MARKET

Australian Dollar	1.4985
British Pound	0.7003
Canadian Dollar	1.2262
Chinese Renminbi	6.8402
Euro	0.7544
Hong Kong Dollar	7.7580
Indian Rupee	48.8450
Indonesian Rupiah	11,351.2500
Japanese Yen	89.1900
Malaysian Ringgit	3.6030
New Zealand Dollar	1.8839
Philippine Peso	46.9350
Singapore Dollar	1.5016
South Korean Won	1,376.1000
Swiss Franc	1.1386
Taiwan Dollar	33.6850
Thailand Baht	34.9000

In U.S. dollar terms

Source: Associated Press

Fed in uncharted waters, eyes new tools

WASHINGTON (AP)—With the country reeling from a recession, Federal Reserve policymakers are weighing what other tools they can use to brace the economy.

Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke and his colleagues wrap up a two-day meeting Wednesday, where they are all but certain to leave a key interest rate at a record low to provide relief.

"They will hold rates down for a good long time and do everything they can to turn the economy around," said Bill Cheney, chief economist at John Hancock Financial Services.

At the same time, the Fed could unveil new actions—or provide more clues as to its thinking—to deal with a stubborn trio of crises—housing, credit and financial.

Bernanke

The problems have fed on each other, aggravating the economic downturn, which is shaping up to be the longest since World War II. The nation's unemployment rate has soared to a 16-year high of 7.2 percent, home foreclosures are spiking and Americans' investments—including 401(k) and home values—are tanking.

At its previous meeting in December, the Fed took the unprecedented action of slashing its key rate from 1 percent to a new, targeted range of between zero and 0.25 percent. Economists predict the Fed will leave rates at that range through the rest of this year.

Despite the Fed's aggressive rate-cutting campaign, a string of bold Fed programs and a $700 billion financial bailout program run by the Treasury Department, credit and financial markets are still stressed and far from normal.

To provide more help, one option is for the Fed to expand a program aimed at bolstering the availability of consumer loans.

Under the program, which is expected to start in February, up to $200 billion will be made available to spur auto, student and credit card loans as well as loans to small businesses. To do that, the Fed will buy securities backed by those different types of consumer debt. The Fed also hopes that action will lower rates on those loans. The program could be expanded in size or scope to provide financing for other types of securities, such as those backed by commercial mortgages.

Stocks rise following US Steel, Amex up earnings

NEW YORK (AP)—Some of Wall Street's earnings anxiety is easing—at least for the time being.

The market had its second straight moderate advance Tuesday, rising after companies including United States Steel Corp. and American Express Co. managed to post profits in a difficult recession. Financial stocks that were mostly higher also lent support to the market.

The major indexes briefly stumbled after the Conference Board said its Consumer Confidence Index in January slipped to its lowest level since the reading's inception in 1967. The report indicated that consumers, who have already cut back drastically, are likely to remain reluctant to spend in the coming months. The index from the private research group slipped to 37.7 in January from a revised 38.6 in December.

But profit reports from U.S. Steel and American Express as well as chip-maker Texas Instruments Inc. and movie rental company Netflix Inc. reassured investors that while the fourth quarter was generally terrible for companies, it wasn't the disaster many had feared—some companies are still able to make money despite the worst recession in decades.

"Remember, things have been so ugly for so long now that it doesn't take a lot to have a positive surprise," said Jim King, chief investment officer at National Penn Investors Trust Co. in Reading, Pa. He said some companies are putting up weak results but the numbers can still look respectable when compared with a year-earlier.

SPACE-SAVER CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
In this photo illustration provided by Kellogg Company, which shows the comparison of a traditional 12 ounce box of Corn Flakes with the new space-saving, 12 ounce box.

Missing Fla. hedge fund manager turns himself in

TAMPA, Fla. (AP)—On the day a Florida hedge fund manager surrendered to face federal securities and wire fraud charges, authorities disclosed what may have set in motion his two weeks on the lam: A partner concerned about the health of their funds after the Bernard Madoff scandal was pressuring him to have their books audited by an independent accountant.

It's not yet clear where Arthur Nadel was during his time on the run, but he peacefully surrendered to authorities with two lawyers in tow in Tampa, about an hour north of his home in Sarasota, the FBI said.

Nadel, who was due to pay investors $50 million when he disappeared, was chained at the waist and wrists when he appeared in court later Tuesday. Attorney Barry Cohen said Nadel is not violent and asked that he be released on his own recognizance. He said Nadel has emotional problems and does not pose a flight risk, but a federal judge ordered him held at least until Friday.

Asked outside court where his client had been, Cohen said, "He went away for a while just to be alone." He said Nadel turned himself in as soon as he learned about the charges.

A law enforcement official who spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity because the investigation wasn't complete said authorities believe he spent time on the run in Louisiana and North Carolina before ending up in Florida. They also suspect he was traveling on a private jet.

Also on Tuesday, it was revealed Nadel's employees found what appeared to be handwritten instructions to his wife to prepare for the ordeal by taking out money. Nadel warned that her avenues to money would soon be blocked and told her to "withdraw as much cash as you can," court documents state.

Oil rises on hope stimulus package can spur growth

SINGAPORE (AP)—Oil prices rose slightly to $42 a barrel Wednesday in Asia, tempering an overnight tumble on expectations that economic stimulus packages will help arrest the global slowdown and boost demand for crude.

Light, sweet crude for March delivery rose 50 cents to $42.08 a barrel by midday in Singapore in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract fell overnight $4.15 to settle at $41.58 amid more evidence of decline in the U.S. housing industry, more job cuts and plunging consumer confidence.

The House of Representatives is expected to vote Wednesday on an $825 billion stimulus bill which backers say could create up to 4 million jobs. The bill, which includes roughly $550 billion in spending and $275 billion in tax cuts, could be signed by President Barack Obama by mid-February.

Policymakers throughout Europe and Asia have scrambled to increase spending and lower interest rates as the worst recession in decades prompts job cuts and a drop in consumer demand.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Sun Microsystems skids to $209M quarterly loss

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Sun Microsystems Inc. skidded to a loss of $209 million in the latest quarter, dragged down by a big charge for job cuts and falling demand for servers and data-storage machines. Still, Sun's shares jumped 5 percent in extended trading because sales topped Wall Street's tepid forecast. The results illustrate the challenge facing Sun, in the throes of major layoffs, as it tries to overhaul its business during a recession that has damaged bigger and sturdier rivals. One of those rivals is IBM Corp., whose mainframe and server sales have suffered as corporations chop their technology budgets. Sun said after the market closed Tuesday that its loss amounted to 28 cents per share in the latest quarter. In the comparable period a year earlier, Sun had a profit of $260 million, 31 cents per share.

Citigroup will not take possession of new aircraft

NEW YORK (AP)—Citigroup won't be getting a new corporate jet after all. Under pressure from President Barack Obama, one of the nation's largest banks reversed course, announcing that it will not take delivery of the jet it had planned to purchase before the credit crisis unfolded. The canceled deal came as many politicians voiced concern about how banks are spending government bailout money. The White House reached out to Citigroup on Monday to reiterate Obama's position that such jets are not "the best use of money at this point," calling them "outrageous" spending for a company getting taxpayer dollars, said a White House official who spoke on condition of anonymity because the official was describing private conversations. In a statement late Monday, Citigroup Inc. said it paid a deposit in 2005 to acquire the jet. The New York-based bank said it did not plan to use government money for the purchase, and it noted that any cancellation of the deal would probably lead to multimillion-dollar penalties.

Yahoo suffers 4Q loss, but tops analyst views

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Yahoo Inc. stumbled to a fourth-quarter loss of $303 million, but the Internet company withstood the recession better than analysts had expected. In an expression of investors' relief, Yahoo's drooping shares picked up nearly 5 percent after the results were released Tuesday. The fourth quarter closed the books on Yahoo co-founder Jerry Yang's fruitless 18-month stint as chief executive. The Sunnyvale-based company hired a new leader, Carol Bartz, two weeks ago in its latest attempt to orchestrate a turnaround. Signaling there will be no quick fixes, Bartz told analysts in a Tuesday conference call that she is trying to understand Yahoo's "very complex" organization as she plots a road map for 2009.

Nation

ACROSS THE NATION

Jurors weep at details of 'Baby Grace' torture

GALVESTON, Texas (AP)—Jurors wept Tuesday watching a woman describe how teaching her 2-year-old daughter proper manners turned into a daylong torture session in which the toddler was beaten with belts, dunked in cold water and flung across a room so violently that she died. Kimberly Trenor, 20, detailed the abuse in a videotaped statement played for jurors during the first day of her capital murder trial. Trenor, 20, told investigators in the statement that she hit her daughter with a thick leather belt to teach her to say "please" and "yes, sir." The little victim was dubbed "Baby Grace" by investigators who worked to identify her decomposed remains after the body was found in a plastic container in October 2007 on a tiny island in Galveston Bay. Trenor's 25-year-old husband, Royce Zeigler II, is to be tried separately on murder charges. His attorney argues that Trenor is responsible for the child's death.

Thousands blacked out as ice storm wreaks havoc

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP)—Tree limbs snapped with a sound like gunshots, blacking out thousands of homes and businesses, and schools and government offices were closed Tuesday as a major storm spread a glaze of ice and snow from the southern Plains to the East Coast. At least 19 deaths had been blamed on the weather. Highway crews fought to keep up with slippery roads and in some places were blocked by fallen tree limbs and power lines. Ice had built up 3 inches thick in sections of Arkansas and Oklahoma. The National Weather Service posted ice storm and winter storm warnings Tuesday along a broad swath from Texas and Oklahoma through the Mississippi and Ohio valleys all the way into northern New England. Radar showed smears of snow and freezing rain stretching from Texas to Pennsylvania during the evening. Broken tree limbs weighted down by ice crashed onto power lines, cutting service to at least 165,000 homes and businesses in hard-hit Arkansas, utilities said.

Wife says Haggard told her of struggles years ago

CHICAGO (AP)—Former evangelical pastor Ted Haggard's wife says she knew about his struggles with same-sex attraction for years and felt he was "winning the battle" before a scandal involving a male prostitute triggered his downfall in late 2006. Gayle Haggard makes the remarks in an appearance with her husband on "The Oprah Winfrey Show" to air Wednesday. She said she was shocked when Haggard first told her the truth about the allegations against him. "The first words out of my mouth were, 'Who are you?'" she said, according to a publicity release issued Tuesday by Harpo Productions. However, Gayle Haggard also said her husband told her early in their 30-year marriage that he "struggled with some thoughts." "I felt it was the thing that could destroy Ted if he gave in to it," she said. "So I prayed for him and I felt as though he was winning the battle."

Obama open to compromise on $825B stimulus bill

WASHINGTON (AP)—On the eve of a key vote, President Barack Obama privately promised Republican critics he stands ready to accept changes in $825 billion economic stimulus legislation, and urged lawmakers to "put politics aside" in the interest of creating badly needed jobs.

"The American people expect action," Obama said Tuesday as he shuttled between closed-door meetings with House and Senate Republicans on a trip to the Capitol that blended substance with political symbolism.

Republicans who attended the sessions said the president did not agree to any specific changes but did pledge to have his aides consider some that GOP lawmakers raised dealing with additional tax relief for businesses.

Obama

Prodded to budge on another point, Obama said that despite Republican opposition, he will insist on giving relief to wage-earners who pay Social Security taxes but do not earn enough to owe income tax.

In a measure of the complicated political dynamic in Congress, one Republican quoted the president as saying any changes would have to come after the House gives what is expected to be largely party-line approval Wednesday to the Democratic-backed bill. The measure includes about $550 billion in spending and roughly $275 billion in tax cuts.

The Senate shows signs of greater bipartisanship, including a decision in the Finance Committee on Tuesday to add a new tax break for upper middle-income taxpayers, at a two-year cost of $70 billion. It was advanced by Sen. Chuck Grassley of Iowa, the panel's senior Republican.

Democratic leaders in both houses have promised to have legislation ready for Obama's signature by mid-February, and Tuesday's developments coincided with fresh evidence of deterioration in a national economy seemingly growing weaker by the day.

Housing prices tumbled by the sharpest annual rate on record in November, according to a closely watched private report released during the day, and a measure of consumer confidence dropped to a historic low.

Separately, the Treasury Department announced distribution of $386 million to 23 troubled banks, the first awards from the federal bailout fund since Obama took office a week ago.

Obama traveled to and from the Capitol in a snowy motorcade on Tuesday, far different from the inaugural parade seven days earlier. This was a business trip, marking his second reach across party lines in as many days in keeping with a pledge to seek bipartisan solutions to major problems.

LA man upset over job kills wife, 5 kids, himself

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A medical technician fatally shot his wife, five young children and himself Monday after claiming in a note to a TV station that he and his wife both had just been fired. Police urged those facing tough economic times to get help rather than resort to violence.

"Today our worst fear was realized," Los Angeles Deputy Chief Kenneth Garner said. "It's just not a solution. There's just so many ways you find alternatives to doing something so horrific and drastic as this."

Ervin Antonio Lupoe and his wife, Ana, also a medical technician, worked at Kaiser Permanente Medical Center West Los Angeles, the hospital said.

"We are deeply saddened to hear of the deaths of the Lupoe family," it said in a statement.

In the letter he faxed to a TV station, Ervin Lupoe claimed he and his wife both had been fired and that she suggested they kill themselves and their children, too.

"Why leave the children to a stranger?" the man wrote, according to KABC-TV.

Although the fax asserted that the woman was involved, police Lt. John Romero said Lupoe was the suspect in the murders.

KABC reported that the man claimed in the fax that a medical center administrator rebuffed them when they showed up to work, told them to file a union grievance and said, "You should have blown your brains out."

AP
Los Angeles County coroner workers take away a body in Wilmington, Calif. on Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2009 from the home where seven people were found dead, including five children.

Lupoe wrote that they filed a grievance but nothing was done and two days later they were fired, KABC said.

"They did nothing to the manager who started such and did not attempt to assist us in the matter, knowing we have no job and five children under 8 years old with no place to go. So here we are," the note said.

At the bottom of the note, Lupoe wrote, "Oh lord, my God, is there no hope for a widow's son?"

The Kaiser Permanente statement made no comment on the claims in Lupoe's fax. Police described the fax but did not release the detail reported by KABC.

FBI tapes played at Ill. gov's impeachment trial

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (AP)—Gov. Rod Blagojevich was hundreds of miles away but his voice boomed through the Illinois Senate's chambers Tuesday as his impeachment jurors listened to FBI wiretaps of conversations in which he seems to demand campaign contributions in exchange for signing legislation.

One person on the recordings assures Blagojevich that a horse-racing track owner "is good for it" and just has to decide "what accounts to get it out of." Another assures him the track owner knows he must keep his "commitment" soon.

Blagojevich replies with comments like "good" and "good job." Legislation sought by the racing industry had been sent to the governor's desk, and on the tapes, he says to reassure a racing lobbyist he hopes "to do this so we can get together and start picking some dates to do a bill-signing."

Senators conducting the trial, which Blagojevich is boycotting though it could remove him from office within days, listened intently as the fuzzy, indistinct conversations echoed through the room—the heating system, reporters typing on laptops and the occasional cough accounting for the only other noise.

Neither the governor nor the others on the call—the governor's brother and chief fundraiser Robert Blagojevich and former chief of staff Lon Monk, officials say—specifically mentions money or any amounts.

Bill Clinton made millions from foreign sources

WASHINGTON (AP)—Former President Bill Clinton earned nearly $6 million in speaking fees last year, almost all of it from foreign companies, according to financial documents filed by his wife, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

The documents obtained Tuesday by The Associated Press show that $4.6 million of the former president's reported $5.7 million in 2008 honoraria came from foreign sources, including Kuwait's national bank, other firms and groups in Canada, Germany, India, Malaysia, Mexico and Portugal and a Hong Kong-based company that spent $100,000 on federal lobbying last year.

Executives at many of the firms that paid honoraria to Bill Clinton have also donated large amounts of money to the Clinton Foundation, according to documents it released last year as part of an agreement with Congress on Hillary Clinton's nomination as secretary of state. That agreement was aimed at preventing the appearance of any conflict of interest between the ex-president's charitable organization and his wife's new job as the United States' top diplomat.

In addition to Bill Clinton's income from speaking fees, Hillary Clinton reported joint holdings of between $6.1 million and $30.3 million in a blind trust as well as cash, insurance and retirement accounts worth between $1 million and $5.2 million.

Hillary Clinton made between $50,000 and $100,000 in royalties from her 2003 memoir "Living History." Bill Clinton earned between $100,000 and $1 million in royalties for his 2004 autobiography "My Life," the documents show. The Clintons reported no liabilities.

Asia

Rohingya migrants go before Thai court

RANONG, Thailand (AP)—A group of 62 barefoot, disheveled Rohingya migrants facing illegal entry charges in a Thai court Wednesday pleaded not to be sent back to Myanmar where they said they were beaten, whipped and warned not to return by soldiers.

The 62 had been on a rickety boat filled with 78 migrants—many with wounds and burns—whom the Thai navy detained Monday in the Andaman Sea off Thailand's southwestern coast.

If found guilty, the migrants could be expelled from Thailand, said Ranong police Col. Weerasilp Kwanseng, an outcome that other officials have said is expected. Four of the migrants were hospitalized and 12 minors have been detained by immigration police because they are too young to be tried in a court, Weerasilp said.

"Have pity on us," one of the migrants, 50-year-old Mamoud Hussain said outside the provincial Ranong Courthouse. "They'll kill me and my family if I go back."

The plight of the Rohingyas—a stateless, Muslim ethnic group who fled persecution in Myanmar—was highlighted earlier this month following accusations that some of them had been abused by Thai authorities. Human rights groups say the Thai navy has twice intercepted boats filled with hundreds of Rohingyas and sent them without food or water back to sea, where hundreds later died.

Thai authorities have repeatedly denied wrongdoing, insisting they only detain and repatriate illegal migrants.

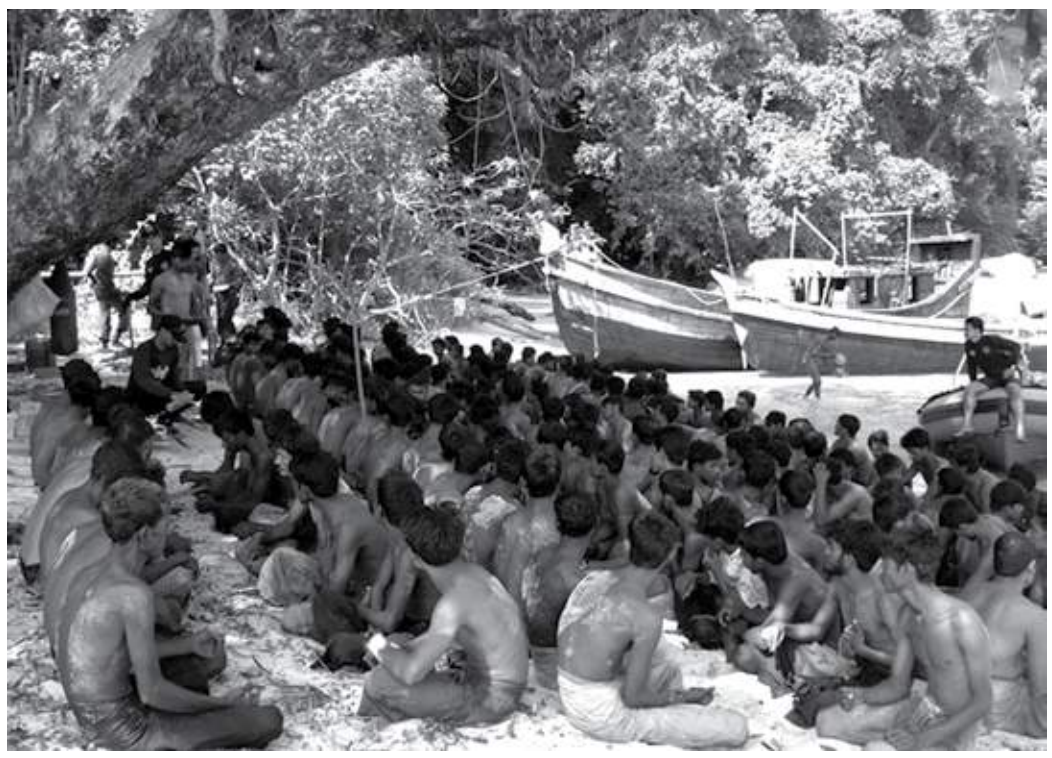
"This is the normal procedure we follow," said Weerasilp. He said if the court charges the Rohingyas with illegal entry they will be turned over to immigration police who could expel them.

But to where?

Rohingyas are denied citizenship and oppressed in their homeland of Myanmar because they are Muslims. Military-ruled Myanmar, which is about 90 percent Buddhist, has been criticized for years by human rights groups for mistreatment of ethnic minorities.

Hussain said his group fled Myanmar about a month ago to escape poverty and persecution, and that the Myanmar navy intercepted their vessel as it sailed south toward Thailand. He said soldiers from four boats boarded their vessel with wooden and metal rods and beat them.

"When they arrested us, they punched, hit and whipped us continuously. They tried to burn the boat, and even beat up the teenagers," said Hussain, a soft-spoken man with graying hair in a soiled T-shirt and longyi, the traditional sarong worn by men and women in Myanmar.



AP

In this photo released by the Royal Thai Navy, shirtless Rohingya migrants sit on the ground on an island after they were arrested by Thai navy officers in the Andaman sea on Dec. 12, 2008.

Report: Myanmar's Chin people persecuted

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP)—The Chin people, Christians living in the remote mountains of northwestern Myanmar, are subject to forced labor, torture, extrajudicial killings and religious persecution by the country's military regime, a human rights group said Wednesday.

The New York-based Human Right Watch said as many as 100,000 people have fled the Chin homeland into neighboring India, where they face abuse and the risk of being forced back into Myanmar.

"The Chin are unsafe in Burma and unprotected in India," a report from the group said. The report said the regime in Myanmar, also known as Burma, continues to commit atrocities against its other ethnic minorities.

Myanmar's ruling junta has been widely accused of widespread human rights violations in ethnic minority areas where anti-government insurgent groups are fighting for autonomy. The government has repeatedly denied such charges. An e-mailed request for comment on the new report was not immediately answered.

Chief Secretary Vanhela Pachau, a top official for India's Mizoram state, said he had not seen the report and could not comment.

"(The police) hit me in my mouth and broke my front teeth. They split my head open and I was bleeding badly. They also shocked me with electricity," the group quoted a Chin man accused of supporting the insurgents, who are small in number and largely ineffective.

He was one of some 140 Chin people interviewed by the human rights group from 2005 to 2008. The group said the names of those interviewed were withheld to prevent reprisals.

A number of people spoke of being forced out of their villages to serve as unpaid porters for the army or to build roads, sentry posts and army barracks.

ASIAN BRIEFS

US pays $40,000 after 15 Afghans die in raid

TAGAB VALLEY, Afghanistan (AP)—U.S. commanders on Tuesday traveled to a poor Afghan village and distributed $40,000 to relatives of 15 people killed in a U.S. raid, including a known militant commander. The Americans also apologized for any civilians killed in the operation. The issue of civilian deaths is increasingly sensitive in Afghanistan, with President Hamid Karzai accusing the U.S. of killing civilians in three separate cases over the last month. Karzai has repeatedly warned the U.S. and NATO, saying such deaths undermine his government and the international mission. In Washington, U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates echoed Karzai's concerns, telling a Senate committee that "civilian casualties are doing us enormous harm in Afghanistan." As U.S. commanders paid villagers near 15 newly dug graves, Karzai met Tuesday in the capital with relatives of some of those killed. He told the villagers he has given the U.S. and NATO one month to respond to a draft agreement calling for increased Afghan participation in military operations.

Powerful flash floods sweep house in southern RP

KIDAPAWAN, Philippines (AP)—An official says powerful flash floods have swept away riverside houses in a southern Philippine village and that a mother and her teenage daughter are missing and feared dead. Village chairman Mario Calayco says heavy rain Monday evening caused the Kabacan River to overflow in Poblacion village on the island of Mindanao, forcing about 100 people to flee to high ground. Calayco said Tuesday the mother and daughter probably drowned when they were carried away in the floods. The father managed to escape before their house was destroyed. He says the displaced have taken shelter at the elementary school. Recent heavy rains have triggered a series of landslides, tidal surges and flash floods throughout the archipelago.

Blowfish poisoning sends 7 to hospital in Japan

TOKYO (AP)—Blowfish testicles prepared by an unauthorized chef sickened seven diners in northern Japan and three remained hospitalized Tuesday after eating the poisonous delicacy. The owner of the restaurant in Tsuruoka city, who is also the chef, had no license to serve blowfish and was being questioned on suspicion of professional negligence, police official Yoshihito Iwase said. Blowfish, while extremely poisonous if not prepared properly, is considered a delicacy in Japan and is consumed by thrill-seeking gourmets. Iwase said the seven men ordered sashimi and grilled blowfish testicles at the restaurant Monday night. Shortly after, they developed limb paralysis and breathing trouble and started to lose consciousness—typical signs of blowfish poisoning—and were rushed to a hospital for treatment, Iwase said. A 68-year-old diner remained hospitalized in critical condition with respiratory failure and two others, aged 55 and 69, were in serious condition, he said.

Japan PM vows more economic measures in key speech

TOKYO (AP)—The Japanese prime minister vowed Wednesday to create 1.6 million jobs over the next three years and take other steps to pull Japan out of its economic crisis, as his opponents seek to thwart him in parliament and force elections to test his public mandate.

Prime Minister Taro Aso's new proposal on jobs was aimed at easing the impact of massive job cuts announced by companies including big names such as Toyota Motor Corp. and Sony Corp., as he mapped out key measures in a major policy speech at the lower house of parliament.

He promised to create 1.6 million jobs over the coming three years by encouraging workers to enter growing areas, such as nursing care, while turning temporary positions into full-time jobs to give more workers job security and benefits.

Aso, who has seen his public support ratings nosedive since taking office in late September, has pumped out a series of stimulus measures worth 75 trillion yen ($842.7 billion).

He also vowed to make basic tax reforms, including a consumption tax increase, by fiscal 2011 as part of government measures to turn around the economy.

Aso's speech comes the day after his ruling Liberal Democratic Party rammed through a contentious extra budget of 4.8 trillion yen ($54 billion) in stimulus measures for the fiscal year through March, after hours of wrangling with the opposition bloc.

Aso hopes the budget, the second in a series, will spur consumer spending and garner support for his embattled government, but his administration continues to teeter. His administration now plans to pass the main fiscal 2009 budget by the end of March, prompting political wrangling over the possibility of national elections.

Rebels lose last key town to Sri Lankan troops

MULLAITTIVU, Sri Lanka (AP)—The rebel-patrolled streets of Mullaittivu were empty Tuesday except for stray dogs, abandoned cows and a few government soldiers.

The Tamil Tigers deserted the last major town under their control as Sri Lankan troops swept into the area pushing the insurgents and thousands of residents into the nearby jungle and villages—the only remnants of the separatists' once substantial shadow state.

But even with the rebels on the brink of defeat in the 25-year-old civil war, fighting still rages. Health officials said dozens of civilians have been killed or wounded in recent fighting and hundreds of thousands of displaced residents are at risk.

Independent accounts of the fighting are not available because the government does not allow most journalists near the area.

But, in a rare trip into the largely sealed war zone, the military on Tuesday escorted a group of journalists, including an Associated Press reporter, into Mullaittivu, showing off the latest prize in its fight to crush the rebels.

Mullaittivu, once a bustling town of 37,000 deep inside the rebels' heartland, was mostly silent except for the chirping of birds and the distant thunder of artillery and heavy machine gunfire.

The Bank of Ceylon was stripped of furniture and desolate, except for a few wires hanging from the ceiling. A nearby preschool was abandoned as well.

Some power lines were down, the windows of a government building were shattered and several buildings had all their ceiling tiles removed, but the town showed more lingering damage from the 2004 tsunami than from the recent fighting.

The Red Cross appealed to both sides Tuesday to allow what they estimated at 250,000 people trapped in the northern war zone to flee to safety.

World

Israeli warplanes hit Gaza tunnels

JERUSALEM (AP)—Israeli warplanes pounded smuggling tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border early Wednesday, a day after a Palestinian bomb killed an Israeli soldier and the Israeli military vowed to respond harshly to any further attacks.

The border flare-up—10 days into an informal cease-fire—came just hours before President Barack Obama's new Mideast envoy was due to meet Israeli leaders. The soldier was killed on Israel's frontier with the Gaza Strip by a roadside bomb planted on the Gaza side and set off by remote control, the military said. Three other members of the Israeli squad patrolling the border were injured.

Israel responded swiftly, sending tanks and bulldozers into northern Gaza to plow up the attack site and launching an airstrike that wounded a Hamas militant "who was prominent in the organization accountable for the attack," according to a military statement. Hamas said the Israeli strike injured one of its men as he rode a motorcycle in the southern Gaza town of Khan Younis.

The border violence was the worst since the sides separately declared cease-fires on Jan. 18 to end a three-week Israeli offensive.

Since withdrawing its troops, Israel has threatened to retaliate hard for any violations of the informal truce.

One of its main targets is the network of tunnels used to smuggle arms, money and people into Gaza from Egypt but despite hundreds of strikes during the war smugglers resumed work after the cease-fire.

There was no claim of responsibility for Tuesday's bombing, but Ramattan, a Palestinian news agency, released a video of the roadside bombing allegedly filmed by militants it did not identify.

The images showed a large explosion next to a jeep moving on the Israeli side of the border fence. A huge plume of smoke emerges as the jeep stops. Two Israeli soldiers are then seen running toward the jeep and gunfire is directed at them before a secondary blast hits them, too.

The Israeli military said it "sees Hamas as accountable for preserving the peace in Israel's southern villages and will respond harshly to any attempt of undermining it."

The violence cast a shadow over the arrival of George Mitchell, Obama's special Mideast envoy. Mitchell arrived in Egypt on Tuesday and was set to visit Israel on Wednesday for three days of talks with Israeli and Palestinian leaders on how to get stalled peace efforts back on track. Mitchell is expected to meet Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, top security officials, and the pro-Western Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas.

After offensive, posters of dead sell well in Gaza

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP)—Some were killed when tank shells hit their homes. Others died when bombs erased their offices. Still others met their end battling Israeli troops.

Now their faces are rolling off the presses at the Nibras print shop, which produces full-color posters and banners of the dead. In the wake of Israel's 22-day Gaza offensive—which killed nearly 1,300 Palestinians—it's one of the few businesses experiencing a postwar boom.

Islamic Jihad fighter Mohammed Bedawi was among the so-called "martyrs" whose demise was commemorated with a custom-made poster—a tradition for anyone killed by Israel.

"The drone hit him," said his cousin, Abed Bedawi, 21, referring to Israel's unmanned surveillance planes, often seen in Gaza's skies. "He was laying a bomb for a tank when the drone fired a missile at him."

Before the war, about 30 percent of the print shop's orders were for martyr posters, co-owner Ahmed al-Hor said; the rest were for things like shop signs and labels for products like tomato sauce, soap and baby food. Now, posters of the dead are 90 percent of his business.

AP

A Palestinian worker holds a print separation, part of the process of producing a poster showing a Hamas militant killed in Israel's recent military offensive in Gaza, at the Nibras Print shop in Gaza City, Monday, Jan. 26, 2009.

A steady stream of customers flowed through the print shop's simple walk-up office on a recent afternoon, all men, most bearded, some wearing military-style pants and jackets. A few admitted affiliation with Gaza's armed groups, and the vast majority of their orders commemorated fallen fighters.

Bedawi unfurled his poster to reveal a large photo of his stern-looking 20-year-old cousin, ringed with silhouettes of palm trees and birds in flight. "As a farewell," the text read. In the top corner was an emblem of Islamic Jihad, a militant group Israel says is backed by Iran.

Bedawi said he'd give it to his aunt to hang in her house.

Others told similar stories. "They were out on a jihad mission, then came back and a missile hit them at the door of their house," said Yusuf Mustapha, who was picking up 1,000 copies of a poster showing 10 Islamic Jihad militants killed in the Zeitoun area south of Gaza City.

Baghdad seeks 'normal' footing on unsteady legs

BAGHDAD (AP)—Iraqi pop music poured from loudspeakers in Baghdad's popular Zawraa Park as families enjoyed picnics and children squealed on the "Space Gun," a thrill ride that looped them around in a full circle.

Then the sounds of a happy Friday afternoon were drowned out by the deep thump of low-flying U.S. military helicopters.

The moment could be a soundtrack for Baghdad as the sixth anniversary of the U.S.-led invasion nears: ample signs that the city is settling back into some regular rhythms, but still far from a comfortable trust that the war and its violent offshoots can be declared over.

During the worst bloodshed—including periods in 2006 and 2007 when Baghdad was hit nearly daily by car bombs—many residents of Baghdad displayed a stunning resilience by keeping markets and schools open despite the huge risks.

Now they are struggling with a different type of resolve: trying to embrace normal routines in a city that has profoundly changed—from the obvious wartime landmarks such as blast walls and electricity shortages to the deeper social scars of families torn apart and the raw memories of Shiite death squads and Sunni insurgent attacks.

There are clear examples of success.

The U.S. military says attacks nationwide are down more than 70 percent from a year ago. Thousands crowd public and amusement parks on weekends. Stores in Baghdad remain open well into the night and attendance at schools and colleges is at its highest levels since the war began in 2003.

Some checkpoints are now adorned with plastic flowers.

Obama tells Arabic network US is 'not your enemy'

CAIRO, Egypt (AP)—President Barack Obama chose an Arabic satellite TV network for his first formal television interview as president, part of a concerted effort to repair relations with the Muslim world that were damaged under the previous administration.

Obama cited his Muslim background and relatives, practically a taboo issue during the U.S. presidential campaign, and said in the interview, which aired Tuesday, that one of his main tasks was to communicate to Muslims "that the Americans are not your enemy."

The interview on the Dubai-based Al-Arabiya news channel aired as Obama's new envoy to the region, former Sen. George J. Mitchell, arrived in Egypt on Tuesday for a visit that will also take him to Israel, the West Bank, Jordan, Turkey and Saudi Arabia.

Obama said the U.S. had made mistakes in the past but "that the same respect and partnership that America had with the Muslim world as recently as 20 or 30 years ago, there's no reason why we can't restore that."

Obama also emphasized the importance of engaging with Iran, a country the Bush administration often singled out as the most dangerous in the region.

Obama condemned Iran's threats against Israel, pursuit of nuclear weapons and support of terrorist organizations, but said "it is important for us to be willing to talk to Iran, to express very clearly where our differences are, but where there are potential avenues for progress."

WORLD BRIEFS

Rare 1,800-year-old figurine found in Jerusalem

JERUSALEM (AP)—A 1,800-year-old figurine believed to have originated from the eastern stretches of the Roman Empire has been discovered by archaeologists outside the walls of the old city, the Israeli Antiquities Authority said. The 2-inch marble bust depicts the head of a man with a short curly beard and almond-shaped eyes who may portray a boxer, the authority said. "The high level of finish on the figurine is extraordinary, while meticulously adhering to the tiniest of details," Doron Ben-Ami and Yana Tchekhanovets, directors of the excavation, said in a joint statement released Monday. Nothing similar has ever been uncovered in Israel, they said, calling it a "unique find." Carved from pale yellow marble, archeologists think the figurine was most likely carried to Jerusalem by a merchant. Archaeologists believe the figurine was used as a weight for a hanging scale of a type common in the Roman period. Tiny holes drilled in its neck were likely used to attach it to the scale, and remnants of metal remain.

Mugabe's party considers unilateral government

PRETORIA, South Africa (AP)—Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe's party said Tuesday it is prepared to form a government on its own if the opposition won't join it—a move certain to anger the West. Patrick Chinamasa, spokesman for Mugabe's ZANU-PF party, said the government should be sworn in on Feb. 13, as proposed by regional leaders earlier in the day. He said his party would give the opposition a few more days to decide whether to join in a unity government. Zimbabwe has been virtually without a government since an inconclusive presidential vote held almost a year ago. The opposition Movement for Democratic Change says it won't join a government until issues including ending state-sponsored violence against dissidents and determining a fair distribution of Cabinet posts are resolved.

Madagascar police try to stop looting in capital

ANTANANARIVO, Madagascar (AP)—Police tried to control looting in Madagascar's capital Tuesday, a day after thousands of anti-government demonstrators set fire to the state broadcasting complex. The Indian Ocean island's president, Marc Ravalomanana, called for calm in a radio address Tuesday, according to a statement posted on the presidential Web site. "It is important that each of us does what he can to restore peace and security," the statement quoted him as saying. Officers had kept off the streets when demonstrators poured through the capital, Antananarivo, which led to speculation they backed the protests. But on Tuesday, police were seen jumping into jeeps and firing into the air to break up crowds. The protesters had taken to the streets after opposition leader Andry Rajoelina's Radio Viva went off the air Monday. Witnesses said that in addition to razing one building at the state broadcasting complex, protesters set fire to an oil depot and a private TV station linked to the president.

Environment

Warming trends call for retooling conservation strategies

By JULIET EILPERIN
(C) 2009, THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON—At the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge on Maryland's Eastern Shore, sea-level rise threatens to drown the brackish marsh on which migrating shorebirds depend. In Northern California, the shrinking snowpack has reduced stream flows that sustain the delta smelt, a federally threatened fish species. Higher summer temperatures in northern Minnesota have depressed the birthrates of the area's once-populous moose, and just 20 inhabit the Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge that was designed in part to shelter them.

As climate change begins to transform the environment in the United States and overseas, policymakers and environmentalists are realizing that the old paradigm of setting aside tracts of land or sea to preserve species that might otherwise disappear is no longer sufficient. It was an idea that worked in 1872, when one of the reasons cited for establishing Yellowstone National Park was to help preserve the few remaining buffalo.

But as temperatures rise and animals and even plants migrate to more hospitable habitats, fixed boundaries set years ago no longer provide the protection some species need. Experts are exploring new strategies, focusing on such steps as protecting migration corridors, collecting and transplanting seeds, making sanctuary boundaries flexible and managing forests in novel ways.

"We have focused on one single principle: You protect the place where the animals live," said Lawrence Selzer, president and chief executive of the Conservation Fund. "That's fine as long as everything's static."

Now, with rapid change, federal agencies, including the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Forest Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) are beginning to draft management policies that take global warming into account.

NOAA Assistant Administrator Richard Spinrad advocates creation of a national climate service to give agencies across the federal government better access to scientific projections so they can anticipate and plan for eventualities such as extended droughts and changes in water flows.

"Many people felt this was a marginal issue to their particular missions, and now they're realizing it's not," Spinrad said, adding that the new thinking reflects "the accelerated pace in which we are seeing the direct impact of climate change on the environment. ... The need for a national climate service is as strong now as the need for a National Weather Bureau was 120 years ago."

Coming up with concrete strategies for coping with warming trends is a tougher challenge. Anne Morkill, who manages the Key Deer National Wildlife Refuge north of Key West, Fla., said her staff is working with the Nature Conservancy and Florida International University on models of sea-level rise to determine to what extent saltwater intrusion will erode the rocky pine habitat that supports the Key deer and other species. The refuge was created in 1957 to protect the rare subspecies of white-tailed deer, which became geographically isolated 20,000 years ago; after dwindling to a low of 25, the population now stands at 500 to 700.

Refuge managers could try to relocate the deer, Morkill said, but "a Key deer outside the Florida Keys is no longer a Key deer." Moreover, she said, officials need to ask themselves: "How much resources should we use today to preserve a habitat that may disappear in 50 years?"

Protecting wildlife, these experts say, can involve setting aside more land for species to migrate, protecting higher-elevation habitats that have lower temperatures and rooting out invasive species that threaten native ones. Scientists are suggesting that managers of marine sanctuaries look for coral reefs capable of withstanding higher temperatures and change sanctuary boundaries if necessary.

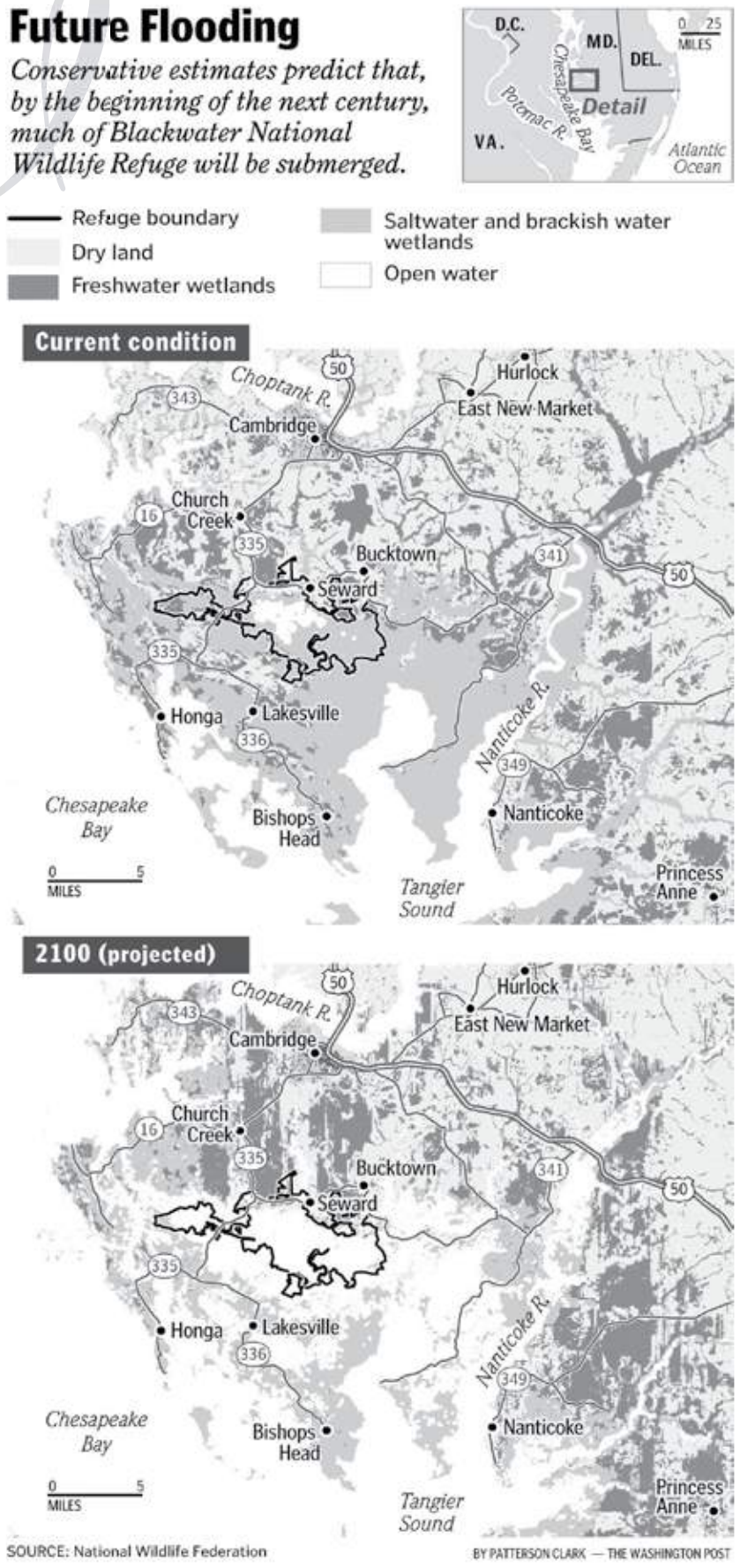
"You can change those lines as long as that flexibility is written into the policy," said David Obura, who directs the nonprofit research and advocacy group Coastal Oceans Research and Development in the Indian Ocean.

Teri Rowles, lead marine mammal veterinarian at NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service, said scientists have recently spotted gray whales north of Barrow, Alaska, in the early months and a humpback whale in the North Slope area, signs that arctic animals are moving north to seek new territory. "That puts them in new areas we have not had to manage before," she said.

Dan Ashe, science adviser to Fish and Wildlife Director Dale Hall, said agencies such as his need "to think on much broader scales about conservation" and shift from basing their projections on past climate patterns to an uncertain future. "We have to be much more predictive, which is an uncomfortable place for us to be," Ashe said.

Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne created a climate change task force in March 2007 that outlined 80 climate policy options on Dec. 3; the Fish and Wildlife Service issued a more detailed draft climate plan less than two weeks later, urging the agency to find ways to connect broader landscapes and assess which species are at the highest risk because of global warming.

"It would have been better if we had started to address it sooner," Ashe said, "but right now we're in a pretty good spot."



THE WASHINGTON POST

In May, the Wildlife Federation published a report estimating that the sea level would rise 27 inches by 2100 and that the Chesapeake Bay region, including the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge on Maryland's Eastern Shore, would lose more than 90 percent of its tidal fresh marsh, tidal swamp and brackish marsh by the end of the century.

Video shows green practices to manage stormwater runoff

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Botanic Garden produced an on-line video, *"Reduce Runoff: Slow It Down, Spread It Out, Soak It In,"* that highlights green techniques such as rain gardens, green roofs and rain barrels to help manage stormwater runoff.

ON THE NET
More information on stormwater management: http://www.epa.gov/greeninfrastructure

The film showcases green techniques that are being used in urban areas to reduce the effects of stormwater runoff on the quality of downstream receiving waters. The goal is to mimic the natural way water moves through an area before development by using design techniques that infiltrate, evaporate, and reuse runoff close to its source.

The techniques are innovative stormwater management practices that manage urban stormwater runoff at its source, and are very effective at reducing the volume of stormwater runoff and capturing harmful pollutants. Using vegetated areas that capture runoff also improves air quality, mitigates the effects of urban heat islands and reduces a community's overall carbon footprint.

The video highlights green techniques on display in 2008 at the U.S. Botanic Garden's "One Planet – Ours!" Exhibit" and at the U.S. EPA in Washington, D.C., including recently completed cisterns.

To watch the video: http://www.epa.gov/nps/lid. ***(EPA)***

Shark sanctuary created in Bahamas

By JULIET EILPERIN
(C) 2009, THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON—The Bahamas government has created a new marine reserve in North Bimini, preserving critical mangrove habitat and shark nursery that had come under threat from a resort there.

The mangroves, which will now enjoy protection from fishing and other "extractive activities," are home to endangered species such as the Nassau grouper and Bimini boa as well as a vibrant nursery for lemon sharks.

The decision—which was approved by the Bahamas Cabinet on Dec. 29 but only announced last week—is a setback for the Bimini Bay Resort and Marina, which has been clearing out some of the island's mangroves in order to construct a resort featuring a hotel, golf course, casino and two marinas. Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham had initially considered establishing the reserve in the late 1990s, but his party lost power in 2002, and in the interim the development proceeded. Ingraham's party won back control in 2007.

Philip Weech, director of the Bahamas Environment, Science and Technology Commission, said the government had concluded that the mangroves on Bimini's North Sound contribute to the nation's fisheries as well as tourism.

"It is vital for the fisheries in the area to retain the ecosystem in that area," Weech said, adding the reserve "helps us also to deal with the issue of climate change, flooding, storm surge and the biodiversity that's there."

Under the plan the government will allow traditional land crabbing in the protected area, along with limited catch-and-release bonefish fishing.

Samuel Gruber, a University of Miami professor who has studied lemon sharks for nearly 20 years as head of the Bimini Biological Field Station, called the creation of the reserve "miraculous."

Gruber, along with four colleagues, published a scientific paper last year showing that dredging in Bimini's North Sound for the resort construction in March, 2001 had cut the first-year survival rates of juvenile lemon sharks there by more than 23 percent.

Ellen Pikitch, executive director of the Institute for Ocean Conservation Science at Stony Brook University, who has collaborated with Gruber on his shark research, said the decision was significant because mangroves represent "essential fish habitat, and they're dwindling all over the globe."

The Bimini Bay Resort and Marina did not return calls seeking comment Thursday. Weech said any further development, including the planned construction of a golf course, would be allowed to proceed only if it did not jeopardize the new reserve.

Demian Chapman, a Stony Brook professor who has also conducted research in Bimini, said the golf course "would be a disaster" because it would damage the reserve's water quality.

"It's just like having a sewage plant next door," Chapman said.

Life & Style

Prize-winning 'Rabbit' writer John Updike dies

NEW YORK (AP)—John Updike, the Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist, prolific man of letters and erudite chronicler of sex, divorce and other adventures in the postwar prime of the American empire, died Tuesday at age 76. Updike, best known for his four "Rabbit" novels, died of lung cancer at a hospice near his home in Beverly Farms, Mass., according to his longtime publisher, Alfred A. Knopf.

A literary writer who frequently appeared on best-seller lists, the tall, hawk-nosed Updike wrote novels, short stories, poems, criticism, the memoir "Self-Consciousness" and even a famous essay about baseball great Ted Williams.

He released more than 50 books in a career that started in the 1950s, winning virtually every literary prize, including two Pulitzers, for "Rabbit Is Rich" and "Rabbit at Rest," and two National Book Awards.

Although himself deprived of a Nobel, he did bestow it upon one of his fictional characters, Henry Bech, the womanizing, egotistical Jewish novelist who collected the literature prize in 1999.

His settings ranged from the court of "Hamlet" to postcolonial Africa, but his literary home was the American suburb, the great new territory of mid-century fiction.

Born in 1932, Updike spoke for millions of Depression-era readers raised by "penny-pinching parents," united by "the patriotic cohesion of World War II" and blessed by a "disproportionate share of the world's resources," the postwar, suburban boom of "idealistic careers and early marriages."

He captured, and sometimes embodied, a generation's confusion over the civil rights and women's movements, and opposition to the Vietnam War. Updike was called a misogynist, a racist and an apologist for the establishment.

On purely literary grounds, he was attacked by Norman Mailer as the kind of author appreciated by readers who knew nothing about writing. Last year, judges of Britain's Bad Sex in Fiction Prize voted Updike lifetime achievement honors.

But more often he was praised for his flowing, poetic writing style. Describing a man's interrupted quest to make love, Updike likened it "to a small angel to which all afternoon tiny lead weights are attached."

Nothing was too great or too small for Updike to poeticize. He might rhapsodize over the film projector's "chuckling whir" or look to the stars and observe that "the universe is perfectly transparent: we exist as flaws in ancient glass."

Author Joyce Carol Oates, a friend of Updike's, said there was a "luminosity in John's style that was just extraordinary. He also had a wonderful, warm, sympathetic sense of humor which people didn't always notice."

In the richest detail, his books recorded the extremes of earthly desire and spiritual zealotry, whether the comic philandering of the preacher in "A Month of Sundays" or the steady rage of the young Muslim in "Terrorist."

Raised in the Protestant community of Shillington, Pa., where the Lord's Prayer was recited daily at school, Updike was a lifelong churchgoer influenced by his faith, but not immune to doubts.

"I remember the times when I was wrestling with these issues that I would feel crushed. I was crushed by the purely materialistic, atheistic account of the universe," Updike told The Associated Press during a 2006 interview.

"I am very prone to accept all that the scientists tell us, the truth of it, the authority of the efforts of all the men and woman spent trying to understand more about atoms and molecules. But I can't quite make the leap of unfaith, as it were, and say, `This is it. Carpe diem (seize the day), and tough luck.'"

He received his greatest acclaim for the "Rabbit" series, a quartet of novels published over a 30-year span that featured ex-high school basketball star Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom and his restless adjustment to adulthood and the constraints of work and family. To the very end, Harry was in motion, an innocent in his belief that any door could be opened, a believer in God even as he bedded

See PRIZE on Next Page

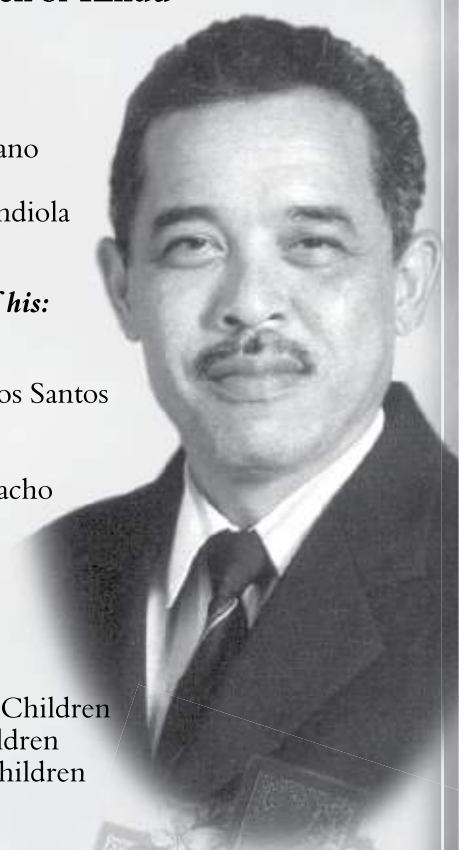
AP

In this May 20, 2006 file photo, author John Updike takes part in a panel discussion at BookExpo America 2006 in Washington.

In celebration of his new life

Joaquin G. Adriano

Better known as "Jack or Kindu"



In his new life he now joins:

Parents: Jose Guzman Adriano
Margarita Guilimon Adriano
Brother: Juan Guilimon Adriano
God-Parents: Felipe C./Joaquin M. Mendiola
God-Father: Vicente S. Borja

His memories will forever live in the hearts of his:

Former Spouse: Marian P. Palacios
Children: Joaquin P. Adriano/Rose C. Delos Santos
(Fred, Shavonilyn, Tiannalyn, Madalyn & Albert)
Carleen P. Adriano/Ray B. Camacho
(Devin, Deimion)
Yvonne P. Adriano
Shane P. Adriano

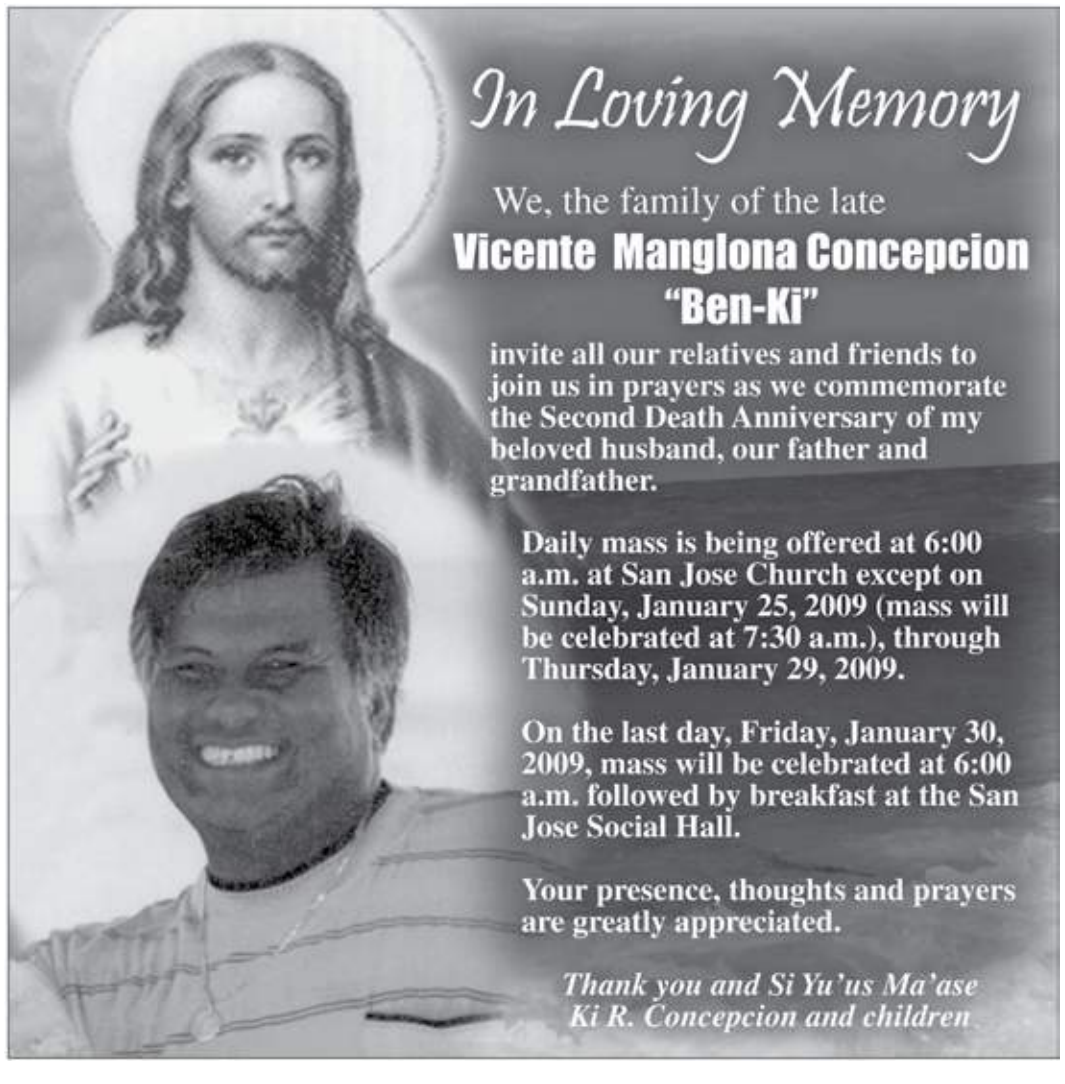
Brothers/Sister & In-Laws:
Antonio G. Adriano & Children
Vicente G./Celina B. Adriano & Children
Jose G./Alice M. Adriano & Children
Petra A./Henry M. Cabrera & Children

Parents-In-Law:
Alfonso A./Emilia S. Palacios
Brothers/Sisters-In- Law:
Jose/Vicenta Sablan & Children
Antonio Sablan/Patricia Concepcion & Children
Consuelo P./Gregorio Baza & Children
Barbara P./†Thomas Ada & Children
Alexander/Cecilia Palacios & Children
Donald P./Elizabeth Palacios & Children
Regina Pangelinan
Albert Palacios/Antonette Palacios & Children

He is additionally survived by numerous cousins, nephews, nieces, godsons and goddaughters.

Daily Mass is being offered every morning at 6:00 a.m. at St. Jude Church, and nightly Holy Rosary at 8:00 p.m. at Mr./Mrs. Henry M. Cabrera residence in Tinian. On January 29, 2009, his remains will be escorted from Commonwealth Health Center to Tinian Health Center at 11:00 a.m. On January 30, 2009, Mass of Christian Burial will be at 10:30 a.m. at San Jose Church and followed by the interment services at San Jose Cemetery.

Thank you for your thoughts and prayers from the Family.


In Loving Memory
We, the family of the late
Vicente Manglona Concepcion
"Ben-Ki"
invite all our relatives and friends to join us in prayers as we commemorate the Second Death Anniversary of my beloved husband, our father and grandfather.
Daily mass is being offered at 6:00 a.m. at San Jose Church except on Sunday, January 25, 2009 (mass will be celebrated at 7:30 a.m.), through Thursday, January 29, 2009.
On the last day, Friday, January 30, 2009, mass will be celebrated at 6:00 a.m. followed by breakfast at the San Jose Social Hall.
Your presence, thoughts and prayers are greatly appreciated.
Thank you and Si Yu'us Ma'ase
Ki R. Concepcion and children

PRIZE

From Page 18

women other than his wife.

The series "to me is the tale of a life, a life led by an American citizen who shares the national passion for youth, freedom, and sex, the national openness and willingness to learn, the national habit of improvisation," Updike would later write. "He is furthermore a Protestant, haunted by a God whose manifestations are elusive, yet all-important."

Other notable books included "Couples," a sexually explicit tale of suburban mating that sold millions of copies; "In the Beauty of the Lilies," an epic of American faith and fantasy; and "Too Far to Go," which followed the courtship, marriage and divorce of the Maples, a suburban couple with parallels to Updike's own first marriage.

Updike's "The Witches of Eastwick," released in 1984, was later made into a film of the same name starring Jack Nicholson, Cher, Michelle Pfeiffer and Susan Sarandon.

Plagued from an early age by asthma, psoriasis and a stammer, he found creative outlets in drawing and writing. Updike was born in Reading, Pa., his mother a department store worker who longed to write, his father a high school teacher remembered with sadness and affection in "The Centaur," a novel published in 1964. The author brooded over his father's low pay and mocking students, but also wrote of a childhood of "warm and action-packed houses that accommodated the presence of a stranger, my strange ambition to be glamorous."

For Updike, the high life meant books, such as the volumes of P.G. Wodehouse and Robert Benchley he borrowed from the library as a child, or, as he later recalled, the "chastely severe, time-honored classics" he read in his dorm room at Harvard University, leaning back in his "wooden Harvard chair," cigarette in hand.

While studying on full scholarship at Harvard, he headed the staff of the Harvard Lampoon and met the woman who became his first wife, Mary Entwistle Pennington, whom he married in June 1953, a year before he earned his A.B. degree summa cum laude. (Updike divorced Pennington in 1975 and was remarried two years later, to Martha Bernhard. He had four children).

After graduating, he accepted a one-year fellowship to study painting at the Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Arts at Oxford University. During his stay in England, a literary idol, E.B. White, offered him a position at The New Yorker, where he served briefly as foreign books reviewer. Many of Updike's reviews and short stories were published in The New Yorker, often edited by White's stepson, Roger Angell.

"No writer was more important to the soul of The New Yorker than John," New Yorker editor David Remnick said in a statement. "We adored him. He was, for so long, the spirit of The New Yorker and it is very hard to imagine things without him."

By the end of the 1950s, Updike had published a story collection, a book of poetry and his first novel, "The Poorhouse Fair," soon followed by the first of the Rabbit books, "Rabbit, Run." Praise came so early and so often that New York Times critic Arthur Mizener worried that Updike's "natural talent" was exposing him "from an early age to a great deal of head-turning praise."

Updike learned to write about everyday life by, in part, living it. In 1957, he left New York, with its "cultural hassle" and melting pot of "agents and wisenheimers," and settled with his first wife and four kids in Ipswich, Mass, a "rather out-of-the-way town" about 30 miles north of Boston.

Some works by John Updike

John Updike, 1932-2009

"The Poorhouse Fair," 1959
"Rabbit, Run," 1960
"The Centaur," 1963.
"Of the Farm," 1965.
"Couples," 1968.
"Bech, a Book," 1970.
"Rabbit, Redux," 1971.
"A Month of Sundays," 1975.
"Marry Me," 1977.
"The Coup," 1978.
"Rabbit is Rich," 1981.
"Bech is Back," 1982.
"The Witches of Eastwick," 1984.
"Roger's Version," 1986.
"S.", 1988
"Rabbit At Rest," 1990.
"Memories of the Ford Administration," 1992.
"Brazil," 1994.
"In the Beauty of the Lilies," 1996.
"Toward the End of Time," 1997.
"Bech At Bay," 1998.
"Gertrude and Claudius," 2000.
"Seek My Face," 2003
"Villages," 2004.
"Terrorist," 2006
"The Widows of Eastwick," 2008.

Short Stories

"The Same Door," 1959.
"A & P," 1961.
"Pigeon Feathers," 1962.
"The Music School," 1966.
"Museums And Women," 1972.
"Problems," 1979.
"Too Far To Go," 1979.
"Trust Me," 1987.
"The Afterlife," 1994.
"Licks of Love," 2001.
"The Early Stories: 1953-1975," 2003.
"My Father's Tears and Other Stories," 2009.

Poetry

"Ex-Basketball Player," 1957.
"The Carpentered Hen," 1958.
"Telephone Poles," 1963.
"Midpoint," 1969.
"Dance of the Solids," 1969.
"Tossing and Turning," 1977.
"Facing Nature," 1985.
"Collected Poems: 1953-1993," 1993.
"Americana: and Other Poems," 2001.

Nonfiction

"Assorted Prose," 1965.
"Picked-Up Pieces," 1975.
"Hugging The Shore," 1983.
"Self-Consciousness," 1989.
"Just Looking," 1989.
"Odd Jobs," 1991.
"Golf Dreams: Writings on Golf," 1996.
"More Matter," 1999.
"Still Looking: Essays on American Art," 2005.
"Due Considerations: Essays and Criticism," 2007.

Oscars org seeks to block ticket sales

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The organization that presents the Academy Awards is suing an Arizona company that it claims is selling tickets to this year's show.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences filed a federal lawsuit in Los Angeles on Monday to block Phoenix-based McMurry Inc. from selling a luxury ticket package to the Feb. 22 show. The seven-night package starts at $175,000, according to the lawsuit and McMurry's Web site.

The Academy's suit claims that McMurry plans to sell at least four of the high-end packages that promise pampering and a strut down the red carpet. It advertises a seven-night stay at a Bel Air hotel, access to celebrity stylists, and a camera crew to record the experience.

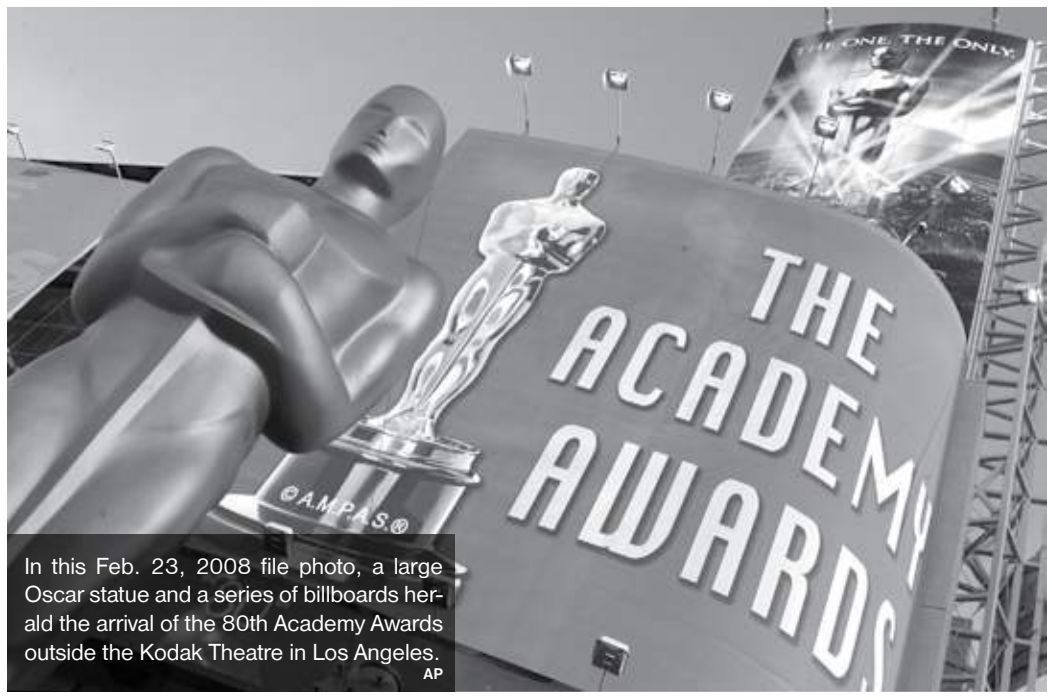
Oscar tickets are not transferrable, a policy the Academy says is aimed at keeping out stalkers and terrorists. The Academy considers people who use traded or bought Oscar tickets trespassers.

An e-mail sent to McMurry seeking comment was not immediately returned.

The academy has filed similar lawsuits in the past to block scalpers from selling seats and recently won a judgment in state court against people who sold tickets to the 2007 show.

Tickets for this year's ceremony, which will be held at Hollywood's Kodak Theater, have not yet been distributed, Academy attorney David Quinto said. It is considered the movie industry's premier event, attracting the biggest names in acting, directing and film production.

He attributed the exorbitant price of this year's tickets to the success of previous efforts to block ticket sales.



In this Feb. 23, 2008 file photo, a large Oscar statue and a series of billboards herald the arrival of the 80th Academy Awards outside the Kodak Theatre in Los Angeles. AP

Death Announcement

Maria Trinidad Lingal Bocago-De Justo

(Marie/Maria)

Born to Life: October 28, 1965
Called to Eternal Rest: January 25, 2009

Parents: Nicanor Alba Bocago
Margarita Lingal Bocago

Funeral Mass will be announced on a later date.

MESSAGE OF APPRECIATION

Sairong Beluong Dulei

Words cannot express our true feeling of appreciation to all who have reached out to us in many ways. Your presence and prayers at the nightly rosary have comforted us as we mourn the loss of our beloved mother and grandmother. We will keep you in our hearts, thoughts, and most especially our prayers, and may God bless us all.

To all our family and friends who unselfishly offered their assistance, condolences and prayers, we are deeply touched.

Mesulang, Si Yu'us Ma'ase, Thank you

From the Family

Rock fans head to Iowa to recall day music died

CLEAR LAKE, Iowa (AP)—It's been 50 years since a single-engine plane crashed into a snow-covered Iowa field, instantly killing three men whose names would become enshrined in the history of rock 'n' roll.

The passing decades haven't diminished fascination with that night on Feb. 2, 1959, when 22-year-old Buddy Holly, 28-year-old J.P. "The Big Bopper" Richardson and 17-year-old Ritchie Valens performed in Clear Lake and then boarded the plane for a planned 300-mile flight that lasted only minutes.

"It was really like the first rock 'n' roll landmark; the first death," said rock historian Jim Dawson, who has written several books about music of that era. "They say these things come in threes. Well, all three happened at the same time."

Starting Wednesday, thousands of people are expected to gather in the small northern Iowa town where the rock pioneers gave their last performance. They'll come to the Surf Ballroom for symposiums with the three musicians' relatives, sold-out concerts and a ceremony as the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame designates the building as its ninth national landmark.

And they'll discuss why after so many years, so many people still care about what songwriter Don McLean so famously called "the day the music died."

"It was the locus point for that last performance by these great artists," said Terry Stewart, president and CEO of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland. "It warrants being fixed in time."

Clear Lake is an unlikely spot for a rock 'n' roll pilgrimage—especially in winter. The resort town of about 8,000 borders its namesake lake, and on winter days the cold and wind make the community 100 miles north of Des Moines anything but a tourist destination.

The crash site is on private property, a five-mile drive from Clear Lake and half-mile walk off the road. Corn grows high in adjacent fields during the summer, but in winter the fields are covered with snow and a path to the small memorial is often thick with ice. The memorial features a small cross and thin metal guitar and records, all of which are draped in flowers during the summer.

Flowers adorn a memorial, Friday, Jan. 9, 2009, at the spot where the plane carrying Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and J.P. "The Big Bopper" Richardson crashed killing all aboard, Feb. 3, 1959, near Clear Lake, Iowa.

AP

"It's a much nicer trip in the summer," said Jeff Nicholas, a longtime Clear Lake resident who heads the Surf Ballroom's board of directors. "But in the winter, you get more of a feel of what it was like."

No one tracks the number of visitors, but fans stop by throughout the year and on some summer days visitors to the crash site can create the oddity of a corn field traffic jam.

Stewart said the deaths still resonate because they occurred at a time when rock 'n' roll was going through a transition, of sorts. The sound of Chuck Berry, Jerry Lee Lewis and Holly was making way for the British Invasion of the mid-1960s.

"The music was shifting and changing at that point," he said. "The crash put a punctuation point on the change."

All three musicians influenced rock and roll in their own way.

Holly's career was short, but his hiccup-vocal style, guitar play and songwriting talents had tremendous influence on later performers. The Beatles, who formed about the time of the crash, were among his early fans and fashioned their name after Holly's band, The Crickets. Holly's hit songs include "That'll Be The Day," "Peggy Sue" and "Maybe Baby."

Richardson, "The Big Bopper," is often credited with creating the first music video with his recorded performance of "Chantilly Lace" in 1958, decades before MTV.

And Valens was one of the first musicians to apply a Mexican influence to rock 'n' roll. He recorded his huge hit "La Bamba" only months before the accident.

The plane left the airport in nearby Mason City about 1 a.m., headed for Moorhead, Minn., with the musicians looking for a break from a tiring, cold bus trip through the Upper Midwest.

It wasn't until hours later that the demolished plane was found, crumpled against a wire fence. Investigators believe the pilot, who also died, became confused amid the dark, snowy conditions and rammed the plane into the ground.

The crash set off a wave of mourning among their passionate, mostly young fans across the country. Then 12 years later the crash was immortalized as "the day the music died" in McLean's 1971 song, "American Pie."

Vonnie Amosson, who manages the Veterans of Foreign Wars hall in Clear Lake, said that ever since the plane crash, the community has embraced the tragedy. It's a continues stream of tourism dollars, and the town's chamber of commerce estimates that this year's events, dubbed "50s in February," will generate more than $4 million for Clear Lake's economy.

"It's kind of sad that that is what we are known for," Amosson said. "But on the other part of it, I think the whole '50's in February' weekend is a huge memorial and it's an honor to them."

In part because of its role in rock history, the Surf Ballroom has retained its vintage look, with a 6,000-square-foot dance floor, ceiling painted to resemble a sky, and original cloud machines on either side of the room. Ten Buddy Holly banners line the wall opposite the stage. The 2,100-capacity ballroom still hosts many national and regional performers, most of whom add their names to a backstage wall that is now crowded with drawings and signatures.

"It's quite a special place," said Nicholas, the Surf board member. "This place looks just like it did in 1959."

Winning posthumous acting Oscar not easy

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The last time an actor won an Academy Award after his death it took no less than a manic, tour-de-force performance that included exhorting Americans to throw open their windows and scream, "I'm as mad as hell and I am not going to take this anymore."

That was the line Peter Finch made famous in 1976's "Network," when he played television newscaster Howard Beale who, courting a nervous breakdown and contemplating suicide over his disastrous ratings, turns into a wild-eyed, raving prophet of doom before his TV audience's very eyes.

"I don't have to tell you things are bad. Everybody knows things are bad. It's a Depression. Everybody's out of work or scared of losing their job. The dollar buys a nickel's worth. Banks are going bust. Shopkeepers keep a gun under the counter. Punks are running wild in the street and there's nobody anywhere seems to know what to do," Finch screams maniacally in a darkly comic scene still popular on the Internet 33 years later.

AP

Fellow cast member Gary Oldman accepts for Heath Ledger, the award for outstanding performance by a male actor in a supporting role for "The Dark Knight" at the 15th Annual Screen Actors Guild Awards on Sunday, Jan. 25, 2009, in Los Angeles.

The role won him the only Oscar awarded posthumously to an actor in the 81-year history of the Academy Awards. Just to be nominated posthumously for an acting Oscar is rare, with Heath Ledger only the sixth performer so honored Thursday.

Dozens of people have been nominated in less prominent categories, including screenwriting, costuming and music. Two who won posthumously were Sidney Howard for screenplay for 1939's "Gone With the Wind" and Walt Disney for short subject (cartoon) for "Winnie the Pooh and the Blustery Day" in 1968.

"The fact that only one actor has ever won an Oscar from the grave tells us that in general at the Oscars, the feeling is when you're dead, you're dead," Tom O'Neil, a columnist for TheEnvelope.com, told The Associated Press last year after Oscar buzz began to build for Ledger's riveting performance as Batman's malevolent nemesis The Joker in "The Dark Knight."

Film legend James Dean was nominated for best actor twice after his death, for "East of Eden" in 1955 and "Giant" the following year. But Ernest Borgnine won for "Marty" in 1955 and Yul Brynner took the Oscar in 1956 for "The King and I."

More recently, Massimo Troisi was nominated for lead actor for 1995's "The Postman" but lost to Nicolas Cage who starred in "Leaving Las Vegas." Ralph Richardson was nominated for supporting actor for 1984's "Greystroke: The Legend of Tarzan, Lord of the Apes" but Haing S. Ngor won for "The Killing Fields."

A sentimental favorite for a posthumous award in 1967 appeared to be Spencer Tracy, who had died shortly after capping a brilliant career with his performance in "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?"

Tracy, who was the calm voice of reason among black and white parents concerned over their children's planned interracial marriage, lost to Rod Steiger, who starred in the interracial drama "In the Heat of the Night."

Like Dean, who died at age 23 in a car crash, Ledger, 28, was an up-and-coming star cut down in his prime. Tracy on the other hand had won Oscars twice before and had been nominated nine times in all.

Finch was 64 when he died of a heart attack two months before the awards ceremony. His widow accepted his Oscar.

Ledger has been nominated once before, for best actor for 2005's "Brokeback Mountain." He lost to Philip Seymour Hoffman who won for "Capote."

Inauguration pianist: 'We did the right thing'

NEW YORK (AP)—Gabriela Montero says she and the other members of the Obama inauguration quartet were not trying to fool anybody by having recorded music played in the biting cold.

Shaken by comparisons to lip-syncers Milli Vanilli, the pianist insists she and fellow musicians Yo-Yo Ma, Itzhak Perlman and Anthony McGill "did the right thing."

"What is upsetting me these days is the fact that we put so much love into this, with a very profound desire to make it so beautiful," the Venezuelan-American pianist said Tuesday in a telephone interview from Boston. "My only regret is that, unfortunately, some people have chosen to focus on the wrong thing."

Just before Obama was sworn in on Jan. 20 with temperatures in the 20s, the quartet appeared to play "Air and Simple Gifts," a short work composed for the occasion by John Williams.

Montero said the quartet actually did play, but the music was drowned out by the amplified music.

The group recorded the work two days earlier but still intended to play it live, she said.

AP

Violinist Itzahk Perlman, left, talks with cellist Yo-Yo Ma as pianist Gabriela Montero, center, looks on while they rehearse at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, Monday, Jan. 20, 2009, a day before the inauguration of President-elect Barack Obama.

A day before the inauguration, about half a dozen keys on the Steinway were sticking, and the piano was not projecting enough sound, Montero said.

"We decided that it would have been a disaster if we went out there with that cold, with the wind, and played our instruments out of tune," she said. "Can you imagine what kind of tone it would have set? ... It would absolutely have been a pathetic way to lead a president into his oath and the moment that this country was waiting for so eagerly."

Would she do anything different?

"I thought, `Should there have been an announcement?' But there wasn't the right time to announce something like that," Montero said.

"We were so excited and so happy, and we still are," she said. "We're very sure we did the right thing as professional musicians."

Paul McCartney set for 'Colbert Report' visit

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The Comedy Central TV channel says Paul McCartney is going to drop in on Stephen Colbert.

McCartney will be a guest on Wednesday's "The Colbert Report," talking up his latest album, "Electric Arguments." The work represents a collaboration between the former Beatle and producer-musician Youth, and was released under the band name the Fireman.

"The Colbert Report" airs at 11:30 p.m. EST weeknights.

AP

In this Dec. 21, 2008 file photo, British musician Sir Paul McCartney signs copies of 'Electric Arguments', a new album re-issued under the name of The Fireman, with exclusive new artwork, at a store in central London.

Springsteen announces world tour

NEW YORK (AP)—Bruce Springsteen's Super Bowl performance will be a teaser for his upcoming world tour.

It officially kicks off in San Jose, Calif., on April 1. He's also headed to Europe, hitting countries like Spain and Sweden.

The news comes on the day he releases his latest CD, "Working on a Dream."

AP

In this Nov. 5, 2008 file photo, Bruce Springsteen plays his guitar up for auction at the 2nd annual Stand Up For Heroes: A Benefit for the Bob Woodruff Foundation in New York.

Digital delay a relief to TV networks

NEW YORK (AP)—The big broadcast networks, already suffering from terrible ratings, will catch a break if the planned transition to digital signals is put off until June.

Pushed by the Obama administration, the Senate approved the delay and the House is expected to follow suit. Instead of Feb. 17, the deadline will be June 12.

That means the transition—expected to leave millions of households at least temporarily without TV pictures—will take place after the TV season is over. With warmer weather and more reruns, fewer people are watching ABC, CBS, NBC and Fox in June than in February, anyway.

There's also the expectation that more homes will be ready to receive the digital signals by then. The latest estimate by Nielsen Media Research is that 6.5 million American homes still aren't prepared for the switch.

"June is a much softer landing for both the networks and the viewers," one network executive said Tuesday.

While still trying to get viewers ready for the switch, the TV industry was preparing for the expected fallout. The traditional February "sweeps," when ratings are used to set local advertising prices, was put back to March. Networks made programming changes.

CBS and ABC, for example, scheduled more reruns than usual for late February to keep fresh episodes of series available for March. CBS made sure that its big events for February (the Grammys and starts of new "Survivor" and "The Amazing Race" seasons) happened before Feb. 17.

PBS made certain to schedule its high-profile series "We Shall Remain" in April to keep it away from the transition deadline. Univision rescheduled its popular music awards show, "Premio lo Nuestro," for March instead of February.

The Feb. 17 date was chosen in part because the National Football League applied pressure to make sure the switch was after the Super Bowl, said Shari Anne Brill, senior vice president for the Carat media buying agency. ABC had hoped to put off the Oscars, scheduled for Feb. 22, to March, she said.

The digital transition would have been another blow for networks still trying to recover from the effects of last year's writers strike. Viewership is down at disturbing rates: 11 percent for ABC, 12 percent for NBC and 14 percent for Fox. Only CBS, with its strong dramas and new hit "The Mentalist," is up over last year (1 percent).

A Feb. 17 switch would have only worsened those numbers. An estimated 13 percent of viewers for the English-language broadcast networks get analog signals, Nielsen said. Many who are making the digital switch are doing it by ordering cable and satellite—giving them many more networks to watch as an alternative to ABC, CBS, NBC and Fox.

The change is expected to be particularly hard on Spanish-language networks, since a larger percentage of their audience gets over-the-air broadcast signals.

Thongs praised and panned by men responding to poll

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR READERS: As promised, today you'll see what some male readers had to say about thongs, as well as the results of my reader poll. Fifty-five percent voted thongs up, 28 percent voted thongs down, and 17 percent gave mixed reviews. And 9 percent of the readers were male.

DEAR ABBY: Thongs up, girl! I switched to thongs when I turned 14 and have never looked back. A man can't wear tight white jeans with anything else. Love .

DINO IN SAN FRANCISCO

DEAR ABBY: I'm a guy who wears string thongs under my work uniform and for casual day or evening underwear. I also wear thong swimwear by my pool in the summer, which I suppose makes me .

STRUNG UP THE MIDDLE IN VEGAS

DEAR ABBY: I have never understood why girls would wear something that appears to violate all laws of comfort.

The only way for me to solve this mystery was to try a thong. I purchased two and wore them exclusively for a couple of days. After the initial "getting used to," they were comfortable. In fact, I like them so much I bought a few more this evening. I am also thinking about buying other ladies' underwear.

While this might be perceived as less than masculine, what I saw in the lingerie section looked a lot more comfortable and sexy to me than my old boxers or briefs. Abby, why won't they let us guys wear sexy underwear?

CONFUSED IN VIRGINIA

DEAR ABBY: I'm voting thongs down. I'm 62 and grew up in the '50s and '60s with three good-looking sisters who always wore pretty ladies' nylon briefs -- all different colors, lace trim, prints, solids, flowers, silk panties. Wow! That was the style back then. All the girls wore them -- Marilyn Monroe, Bettie Page, etc.

In the '70s and '80s girls adopted those ugly bikini panties, and now they're wearing thongs? Abby, please urge them to adopt those pretty panties of the '50s and '60s again.

JACK IN BROCKTON, MASS.

DEAR ABBY: Wearing thong underwear has nothing to do with comfort. It's about concealing the dreaded pantyline on today's tight fashions. Pulling the waist so high as to expose it is unsightly on most of the bodies I have seen. And yeah, it's like driving past the scene of an accident -- you know you shouldn't, but you just have to look!

ROBERT IN MOUNTAIN LAKES, N.J.

DEAR ABBY: Thongs up or down? Up, they're uncomfortable—I twist my neck and strain my eyes—but I have to say I really love them down.

TODD IN MILWAUKEE

DEAR ABBY: I have three responses to "San Diego Sinner." One: Wearing a thong does not make one a sinner. Two: If you're wearing one only to avoid being laughed at, you're wearing it for the wrong reason. Three: There are attractive and sexy alternatives to thongs such as bikini underwear and boy shorts.

MATT IN SAN FRANCISCO

DEAR ABBY: Thong underwear is as silly a fad as I can remember. Not all males find thong underwear appealing. Artful but suggestive concealment is what makes females appealing to men, not explicitness.

M.J.H., COLUMBUS, OHIO

DEAR ABBY: With regard to your poll, the whole world now knows Abby doesn't wear a thong. Pity.

CLIFF IN HALLANDALE, FLA.

DEAR CLIFF: OK, so I'm "a little behind" the times. P.S. I love your imagination.

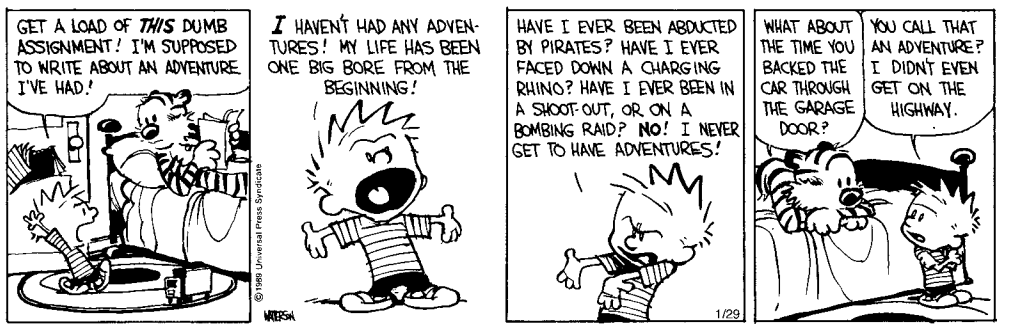
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." To order, send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

Pastimes

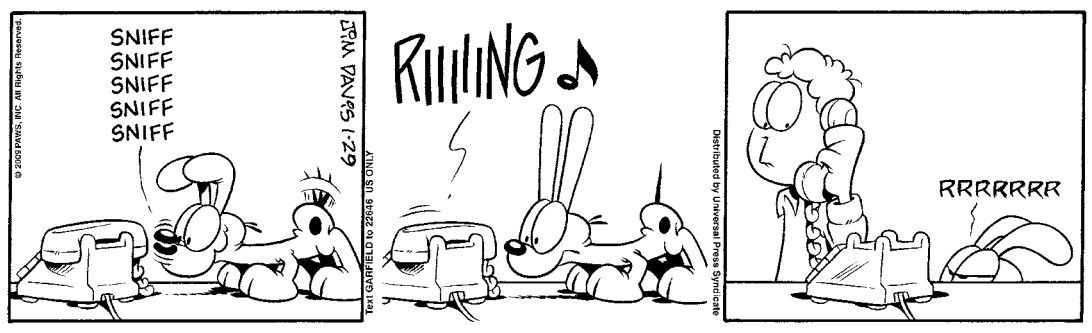
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


GET A LOAD OF THIS DUMB ASSIGNMENT! I'M SUPPOSED TO WRITE ABOUT AN ADVENTURE I'VE HAD!
I HAVEN'T HAD ANY ADVENTURES! MY LIFE HAS BEEN ONE BIG BORE FROM THE BEGINNING!
HAVE I EVER BEEN ABDUCTED BY PIRATES? HAVE I EVER FACED DOWN A CHARGING RHINO? HAVE I EVER BEEN IN A SHOOT-OUT, OR ON A BOMBING RAID? NO! I NEVER GET TO HAVE ADVENTURES!
1/29
WHAT ABOUT THE TIME YOU BACKED THE CAR THROUGH THE GARAGE DOOR?
YOU CALL THAT AN ADVENTURE? I DIDN'T EVEN GET ON THE HIGHWAY.
© 1988 Universal Press Syndicate

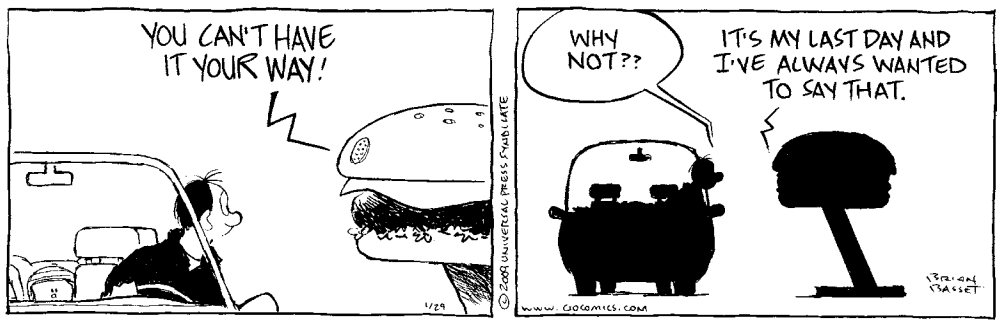
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


YOU CAN'T HAVE IT YOUR WAY!
1/29
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WHY NOT??
IT'S MY LAST DAY AND I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO SAY THAT.
BRYAN BASSET
www.gocomics.com

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

WHY IS IT OKAY TO PUT SHOCK COLLARS ON DOGS BUT NOT AMERICAN IDOL CONTESTANTS?
GOOD POINT.
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1-29
GLENN MCCOY

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Weaponry
5 "Roscoe" Iolani Palace locale
12 Ayatollah's predecessor
13 Reproductive cells
14 Obnoxiously proper one
15 Gilpin of "Frasier"
16 Aviv lead-in
17 "— never work"
18 Jaundiced
20 Creepy —
22 Lennon's lady
23 Judge Lance
24 "That hurts!"
27 Administered
32 Dos Passos trilogy
33 "I told you so!"
34 Mauna —
35 Uncommunicative
38 Requests
39 Court
40 Knock ('em) dead
42 Disagreeing
45 Cantankerous
49 Big rig
50 Spring mo.
52 Hip bones
53 Tehran's country
54 Snitch
55 Void partner
56 Trig function
57 Blond shade
58 Mirth

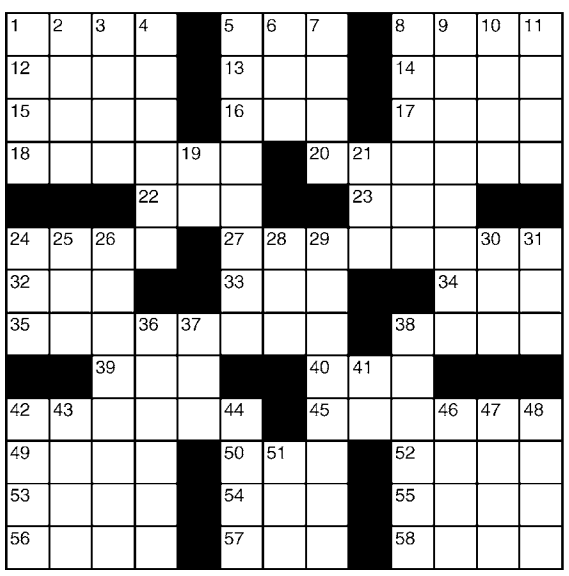
DOWN

1 Venomous vipers
2 Comic Caroline
3 Crumbly deposit
4 1862 battle site
5 Declined
6 "Hail, Caesar!"
7 Body powder
8 Narcotic
9 Museum pieces
10 Mound
11 Unattractive
19 Performing
21 Disencumber
24 "— Gang"
25 Work with
26 Gotham City villain
28 Still, in verse
29 After-taxes value
30 "A mouse!"
31 "— Kapital"
36 Cut aid
37 Massachusetts cape
38 Storefront canopy
41 On the other hand
42 Unrepaired
43 Garr or Hatcher
44 Poet Teasdale
46 Jewish month
47 Anger
48 Bulldogs' school
51 — de deux

Solution time: 25 mins.

A	F	A	R	■	S	O	B	■	A	R	E	A
L	O	G	E	■	P	A	L	■	T	O	R	N
M	O	U	S	S	A	K	A	■	L	U	S	T
S	T	E	A	K	■	■	B	L	A	S	T	S
■	■	■	L	I	A	R	■	A	S	S	■	■
B	A	B	E	■	Q	U	A	D	■	E	B	B
E	R	R	■	F	U	S	S	Y	■	A	I	L
E	M	U	■	E	A	S	T	■	C	U	L	T
■	■	S	A	M	■	E	A	C	H	■	■	■
P	A	S	T	A	S	■	■	B	A	T	H	S
O	R	E	O	■	P	R	U	S	S	I	A	N
K	I	L	N	■	O	U	R	■	E	T	U	I
E	A	S	E	■	T	E	N	■	D	O	L	T

Yesterday's answer 1-29



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Jonny Lang, 28; Sara Gilbert, 34; Heather Graham, 39; Tom Selleck, 64

Happy Birthday: Don't overreact, overindulge or overdo this year. Stick to simple and conservative methods and you will not suffer losses or consequences. Let go of the past and start with a clean slate. You will see growth, leading to long-term success. Your numbers are 9, 13, 19, 25, 33, 37, 44

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Speak from the heart with honesty and integrity and you will overcome any professional problem you face. Don't let jealousy cloud the real issues. Be observant rather than defensive. Contribute and move on. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Don't share your secrets. Someone will gossip, leaving you with the task of explaining what you are up to and why. A surprise will play out to your advantage. Emotional issues can be resolved. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): It's time to start all over again. Open doors that have been closed for some time and you will find out something about someone who interests you. There is no room for jealousy or holding a grudge—learn from past experience so that you handle situations better in the future. ✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Your life is changing for the better so stop trying to make things stay the same. You have to let go and give in. Don't spend money foolishly or you will be upset by the results for some time to come. ✪✪✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Love can turn into a costly affair if you are wrapped up in the moment. Think twice about being generous when all that's required of you is to confirm your true feelings and talk about your future intentions. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Don't confuse what needs to be done with what you want to do. A love relationship can turn into a partnership that is not only beneficial emotionally and personally but financially and professionally, as well. Do whatever it takes to enhance your relationship. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Someone who loves you is likely to be pushy regarding what he or she thinks you should do with your future. Take heed of the suggestions made but, before you make a final decision, consider what's best for you. Only you can be sure of that. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Don't be caught up in someone else's plan, especially if it will cause problems with the ones you love. You can expect someone to be deceptive with his or her assessment of a job you want done. Make subtle changes that will enhance your love life. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Stick close to home and avoid anyone putting demands on you. Be honest about what you want to see happen. A change in your vocation can be made if you pick up some new skills or start a service that utilizes the skills you already have. ✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): There are options and opportunities, so don't think you have to stay in a position that really doesn't suit you. A contract or legal settlement can change your life instantly. Don't hesitate to make needed changes. ✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Sizing down doesn't have to be a bad thing, especially when it can bring you the freedom you need to do something that is important to you. Consider your options and make your move. You won't be sorry. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Something will be brought to your attention that causes a reality check. Open your eyes and make amends. Someone from your past can do more damage now if you don't fix the problem. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are a powerful speaker and an engaging personality. You are outgoing and sensitive, reactionary and relentless.

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

9			6		8			5
		5		2		4		
	8						9	
4								6
	1			5			7	
7								8
	9						3	
		2		6		9		
8			2		4			7

Difficulty Level ★★★ 1/29

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

8	7	3	5	6	4	9	1	2
5	4	6	1	2	9	3	8	7
9	2	1	8	7	3	4	6	5
1	3	5	4	8	7	2	9	6
6	8	2	3	9	5	1	7	4
7	9	4	2	1	6	8	5	3
4	6	8	9	5	2	7	3	1
2	5	9	7	3	1	6	4	8
3	1	7	6	4	8	5	2	9

Difficulty Level ★★★ 1/28

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

THE SAGUENAY FJORDS **Solution: 9 letters**

W F Q D R A I N C S E A W A Y
H A W U T R I N I T E S I T E
A C L O E N E D H A E K I A N
L E C L R B E Y P P T D N A U
E L L A F R E T A W E N I I (D)
S S O C S E A C R L G T U (E) M
E H W S F S T N G V N E (E) O O
D I E A F T U I O E O (P) I Y M
I P R I I R G O R A L A E A R
M S B N L A E U D E B H N W E
E H A T C I A S Y A U S I R H
N A S J A L M A H L T G A E T
T W I E L E V A T I O N R T E
C A N A D A G U L E B R O A D
G R A N I T E N I R A M M W M

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Alma, Basin, Beluga, Canada, Capes, Cliff, Deep, Drain, Dune, Elevation, Face, Fresh, Granite, Hydrographic, Lac Saint Jean, Laurentian, Layer, Long, Lower, Marguerite, Marine, Minke, Moraine, Mountain, Narrow, Quebec, Road, Seaway, Sediment, Shape, Shipshaw, Side, Site, Tadoussac, Thermo, Tide, Trail, Trinite, Wall, Waterfall, Waterway, Whales

Yesterday's Answer: Blintzes

WONDERWORD offers the "Book of Celebrities," for $5.95 each (US funds only) payable to Universal Press Syndicate plus $3 postage for the first book order, $1 p&h for each additional book. Send to **WONDERWORD**, 1130 Walnut St., Kansas City, Mo. 64106 or call toll-free, 1-800-642-6480. Order online at upuzzles.com.

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WHATZIT?™

Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.

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Find today's solution in this section

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Fax. (670) 234-5749

Attorney for Bank of Guam

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

BANK OF GUAM, Plaintiff,	)	CIVIL ACTION NO. 08-0073
vs.	)	
VALENTINE S. CABRERA, Defendant.	)	AMENDED SUMMONS

TO: THE ABOVE-NAMED DEFENDANT VALENTINE CABRERA

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED TO APPEAR by the 21st day after the fourth date of publication of this AMENDED SUMMONS and defend the above entitled action in the CNMI SUPERIOR COURT, at the Office of Clerk of Court, CNMI SUPERIOR COURT, 1st Floor, Guma' Hustisia, Ilimwal Aweewe, House of Justice, Susuper Village, P.O. Box 500307, Saipan MP 96950-0307; and answer the complaint of the plaintiff Bank of Guam, and serve a copy of your answer upon **Robert Tenorio Torres**, attorney for Plaintiff Bank of Guam, at **Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya), P.O. Box 503758, Saipan, MP 96950**; and in case of failure to do so, judgement will be rendered against you according to the demand of the COMPLAINT, which has been filed with the Clerk of Court.

So **ORDERED** this 13th day of January 2009.

/s/ Bernadita A. Sablan
Clerk of Court

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• 3-Liner with picture	$45
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- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on Monday issue.

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Classified Ads

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All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

Diaw, Brown lead Bobcats past Lakers

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Boris Diaw had 23 points, nine rebounds and nine assists, reserve Shannon Brown scored five of his 14 points in the second overtime, and the Charlotte Bobcats continued their surprising recent domination of the Los Angeles Lakers by beating them 117-110 on Tuesday night.

The win was the Bobcats' fifth in their last six games against the Lakers, who got 38 points from Kobe Bryant before the Los Angeles star fouled out for the first time this season in the final minute of the first overtime.

Raymond Felton had 22 points, a career-high 11 rebounds and nine assists, Raja Bell added 17 points and Gerald Wallace scored 15 before leaving late in the fourth quarter after a flagrant foul by Andrew Bynum knocked him to the floor.

Bryant had eight rebounds and five assists to go with his 38 points. Bynum added 24 points and 14 rebounds and Derek Fisher scored 14 for the Lakers (35-9), who had their four-game winning streak snapped while losing for just the fourth time in 27 home games.

Brown's 3-pointer with 2:14 remaining put the Bobcats on top 110-107, and they led the rest of the way. Okafor scored four points around a three-point play by Bynum and Felton added two foul shots with 25.2 seconds left, giving Charlotte (19-26) a 116-110 lead and clinching the victory.

The Lakers rallied from a seven-point deficit in the final 2 1/2 minutes to force the first overtime, and got two baskets from Bryant and another from Bynum to begin the first extra period up 99-93 lead with 2:55 left.

But the Bobcats came back, and a 3-pointer by Diaw with 32.2 seconds to play tied the game at 103. Bryant was out of the game at that stage, having fouled out with 39.8 seconds left after scoring eight points in the first overtime.

Neither team got a good shot off after that, forcing the second overtime.

Diaw scored seven points during a 9-0 run that gave the Bobcats a 90-83 lead before seven points by Bryant and a 3-pointer by Fisher with 14 seconds left in the fourth quarter tied the game at 93. Felton missed a 22-footer as time expired to force the first overtime.

Neither team led by more than four points in the third quarter until Charlotte scored six straight for a 70-63 lead with 3 1/2 minutes left in the period. The Bobcats led 76-70 entering the fourth quarter.

The Bobcats outscored the Lakers 10-3 for a 36-26 lead midway through the second quarter. Gasol had shot 2-of-10 and Bryant was 0-of-5 at that stage.

Bryant scored for the first time on a jumper with 5:20 left in the period, and added 10 more points before halftime, helping the Lakers outscore the Bobcats 22-13 to draw within one point.

Lakers forward Trevor Ariza left with 4:52 left in the second quarter after suffering a concussion and didn't return. He's not expected to miss any playing time.

Charlotte Bobcats forward Boris Diaw, left, scores past Los Angeles Lakers guard Kobe Bryant during the second half of their NBA Basketball game in Los Angeles, Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2009. AP

Spurs 106, Jazz 100

At Salt Lake City, the San Antonio Spurs powered away early in the fourth quarter to set up a win over the Utah Jazz to extend their lead atop the NBA's Southwest Division.

Tim Duncan had 24 points and nine rebounds, and Manu Ginobili scored 10 of his 13 points in the fourth quarter as San Antonio moved 1-1/2 games above New Orleans in the divisional standings.

The Spurs pulled away with a 10-0 run early in the fourth quarter and led the rest of the way, making their last 10 free throws to make up for a woeful start from the foul line. Ginobili was 6-for-6 from the line in the final 24 seconds and 11-for-12 in the game.¤

Magic 135, Pacers 111

At Orlando, Florida, Mickael Pietrus had 27 points and 10 rebounds to lead Orlando past Indiana in his first game in almost a month.

Pietrus, who missed the previous 12 games with a broken right wrist, came off the bench to lead a well-balanced Magic attack. Seven players reached double figures scoring, including Rashard Lewis with 24 points and Dwight Howard with 22.

T.J Ford, had 23 points for the Pacers and Danny Granger, who came into the game averaging 26.1 points, had only 10.

Cavaliers 117, Kings 110

In Cleveland, Mo Williams strengthened his argument to be an All-Star by scoring a career-high 43 points as Cleveland pipped Sacramento.

LeBron James recorded his 20th career triple-double for the Cavaliers.

Williams, who is hoping to join James on the Eastern Conference team at next month's All-Star game in Phoenix, had his finest game since joining the Cavs. The point guard went 15-of-24 from the floor, made a career-best seven 3-pointers and added 11 assists and eight rebounds.

James scored 23 points with 15 rebounds and 11 assists, his third triple-double this season. He picked up assist No. 10 in the third quarter with a pass to Williams, who knocked down three consecutive 3s—all off feeds from James—in a span of 1:05. Williams was so good, James only had to take 10 shots.

The Kings lost their sixth straight and dropped to 0-19 against Eastern Conference teams.

Nuggets 100, Grizzlies 85

At Memphis, Tennessee, Chauncey Billups scored 14 consecutive points in the third quarter and finished with 29 to lead Denver over Memphis.

Billups' 14-point run allowed the Nuggets to build a 15-point lead en route to their 30th victory of the season. Denver's 30-15 record represents its second-best 45-game start in the franchise's history.

In addition to Billups, the Nuggets got 20 points from J.R. Smith and 16 points from Linas Kleiza. Chris Anderson had five of Denver's 15 blocked shots, a season high.

Serena to play Dementieva in Aussie Open semis

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—After struggling under a searing sun, Serena Williams found her rhythm when the Rod Laver Arena roof was closed Wednesday and advanced to the Australian Open semifinals.

Williams, a three-time Australian champion, was only one game away from a quarterfinal exit before recovering to beat Russia's Svetlana Kuznetsova 5-7, 7-5, 6-1.

Williams, who has nine Grand Slam singles titles, was thankful that the roof was closed over after she'd dropped the first set.

The temperature had risen to 107 degrees by then. When the air conditioning finally kicked in, so did Williams' performance.

Until then, she said, "I was in like an out-of-body experience."

"I felt I was watching someone play in a blue dress, and it wasn't me, because it was so hot out there," she said. "And I kept trying to tell myself that it's not hot, you know.

"But it got hotter ...."

Down a set and a break and with Kuznetsova serving for the match, Williams broke back to get even at 5-5 when Kuznetsova missed an open-court volley that turned the match.

Williams held and then broke Kuznetsova's serve again, pulling to a set apiece with a forehand winner down the line.

The American broke to lead 3-1 in the third and then, after saving two breakpoints with a pair of forehand winners, the result was never in doubt.

After beating the Russian, she joins three others in the semifinals.

"Me against the Russians, I guess," she said.

Williams next plays Olympic gold medalist Elena Dementieva, who ousted Carla Suarez Navarro 6-2, 6-2 in Wednesday's earlier match.

Olympic silver medalist Dinara Safina and No. 7-seeded Vera Zvonareva meet in Thursday's other semifinal.

Dementieva questioned the wisdom of leaving the stadium open for her match as temperatures soared.

The roof stayed open for the first set of the Williams-Kuznetsova match, but the tournament's Extreme Heat Policy was put into effect at the break between sets - giving the players time to refresh and organizers time to close the retractable roof. Williams also got her rackets restrung in the break.

"I finally started playing a little better in the end of the second set," she said. "I felt like I was really, really off before."

Kuznetsova, the 2004 U.S. Open champion and only other major winner in the quarterfinals, said she was angry the roof was closed.

"It gave her more chances," Kuznetsova said. "Definitely it was a big change. I was very comfortable playing outside.

"She has big serve. She was using it very good when the roof was closed. I guess it was in her favor very much.

"Definitely angry. Why should I not be?"

The temperature rose to 109 as the afternoon progressed, the start of a heatwave predicted in and around Melbourne through Saturday.

Williams won the Australian title in 2003, 2005 and 2007. She's two wins from continuing the odd-numbered sequence.

"I just have to keep playing well and just go for two more," she said.

While the Williams-Kuznetsova match was interrupted for 10 minutes to close the roof, matches on outside courts were suspended or rescheduled to be played in the second closed arena.

Dementieva made a fast start against 20-year-old Suarez Navarro of Spain, who upset Venus Williams in the second round, winning 16 of the first 18 points for a 4-0 lead.

She raced through the first five games in 22 minutes and, after eventually holding serve in a sixth game that went to deuce 11 times and lasted 17 minutes, finished off in 1 hour, 35 minutes.

"You can work so hard trying to get ready for the weather conditions, but when you have to face 40 (104 Fahrenheit) or 41 (106), there is no way you can get used to it," Dementieva said. "The best way is to play as quick as possible and just get away from the court. I mean, there is no way to adjust with the heat here."

Both players were soon draping towels packed with ice around their necks during changeovers and sought shade as long as possible behind the baselines between points.

Dementieva was having particular problems with her high service toss as she looked straight up into the sun, double-faulting four times in that long game. She finished with 10 double-faults.

She blamed that on the harsh sun.

"Usually when you're playing at 11 a.m., it's not that strong. But today it was a very dangerous sun and very strong," she said.

Fourth-seeded Dementieva had never gone past the fourth round in 10 previous trips to Australia. Now she's only one win from reaching a third Grand Slam final. The 27-year-old Russian lost the French and U.S. Open finals in 2004.

Rafael Nadal, who beat Roger Federer in the French Open and Wimbledon finals and then overtook him at No. 1, plays No. 6 Gilles Simon of France in the men's quarterfinals later Wednesday.

Jo-Wilfried Tsonga, who upset Nadal in the semis here last year before losing the final to defending champion Novak Djokovic, faces Spanish Davis Cup winner Fernando Verdasco.

Djokovic dropped out of the tournament Tuesday when he retired ill from his quarterfinal against Andy Roddick while trailing two sets to one. Roddick will play Federer in a semifinal.

Warner's comeback rooted in faith, hard work

SUPER BOWL XLIII TAMPA BAY 02.01.09

TAMPA, Fla. (AP)—Four years ago Kurt Warner was having a hard time finding a job.

No matter that he had been to two Super Bowls and won one of them, or that he'd been an NFL and Super Bowl MVP.

The perception was that he was washed up, finished, that his storybook career was approaching an ignominious end.

Then the 37-year-old quarterback wrote the most amazing chapter of all with a season that might cement him a spot on football's Hall of Fame, especially if he can lead the Arizona Cardinals, of all teams, to a Super Bowl victory Sunday over the Pittsburgh Steelers.

"Hopefully, it would recognize him for exactly what he is—one of the best players to ever play his position," his coach, Ken Whisenhunt, said.

Warner's story is rooted in a deep faith and a persistent drive to be the very best he can be as a person and a football player.

"My approach is hoping that every player that I've played with, every place that I've been, that in some way, shape or form, I leave my stamp on those people and those places," he said at the Super Bowl media day on Tuesday. "That's what I want my legacy to be. The football stuff, that's all gravy."

The football stuff impresses his Pittsburgh counterpart, Ben Roethlisberger.

"He's gone through so much and done so much," Roethlisberger said. "To me, I love watching him play. He throws an unbelievable pass and—you know what?—I have a lot of respect for him and the way he plays the game."

Warner's return to the top is a dominant theme leading up to this Super Bowl, just as it was in his 1999 season.

"Most times when you do something great, it's not overnight," he said. "It's not something that comes easy. It comes with a lot of hard work, a lot of time, a lot of commitment."

The comment pretty much sums up his life.

Warner played for Northern Iowa, but didn't start until he was a senior. Then he tried out for the Green Bay Packers, but was quickly released. So it was back to Cedar Rapids, where he got a job stocking shelves for a supermarket.

His route from there to the NFL included three seasons with the Iowa Barnstormers of the Arena Football League and two years with the Amsterdam Admirals in NFL Europe.

Before the 1999 season, Warner was a backup with the Rams when starter Trent Green was injured. Coach Dick Vermeil turned to Warner, and the result was one of the most prolific offenses in NFL history.

In the next three years, despite missing five games because of injury, Warner threw for 12,612 yards and 98 touchdowns. There was the Super Bowl championship season and the near-miss against New England in 2001.

But injuries to his finger and hand in 2002 signaled the beginning of the end of his days in St. Louis.

He lost the starting job to Marc Bulger and was released by the Rams after the 2003 season.

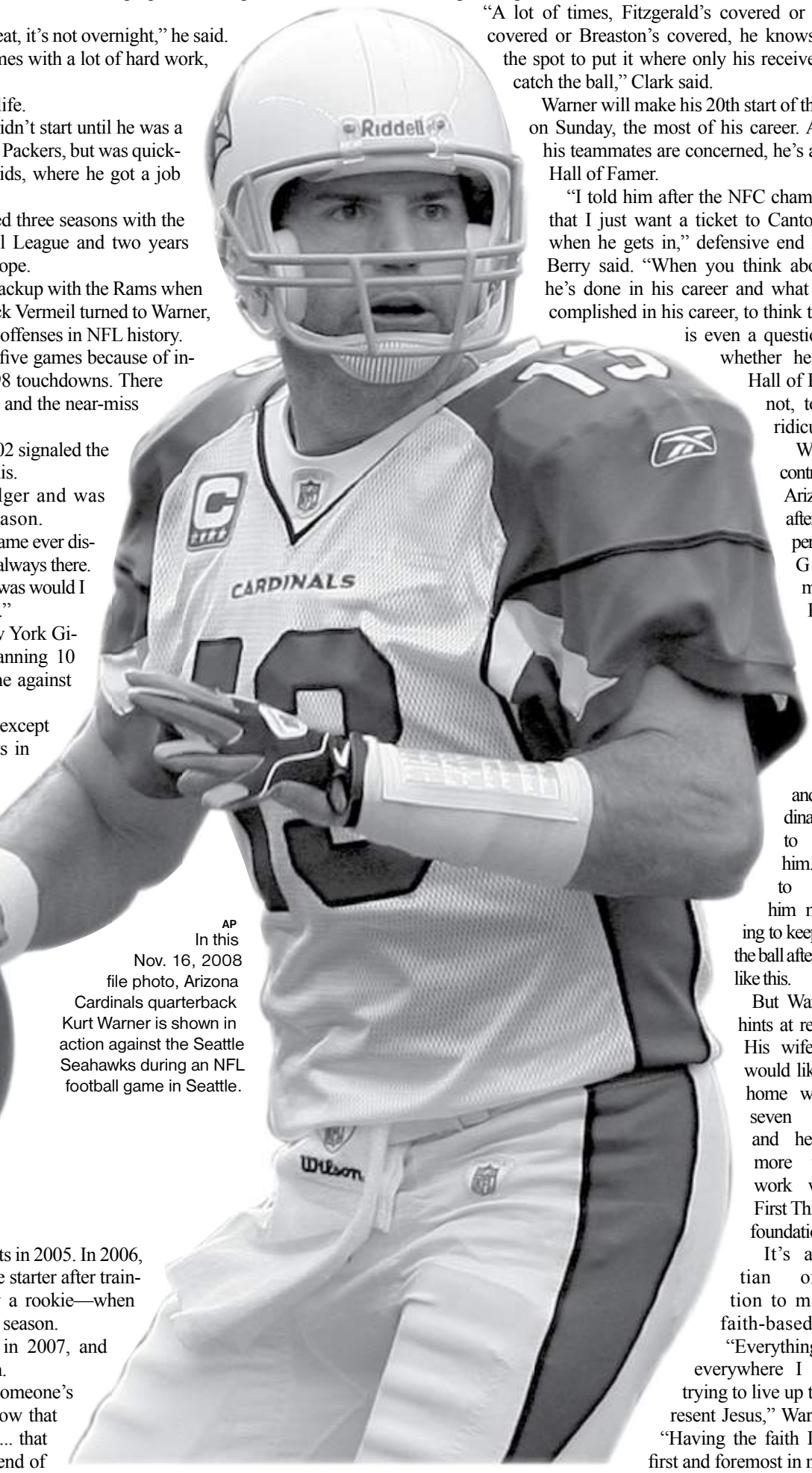
"I never felt like the physical part of my game ever disappeared," Warner said. "I felt like that was always there. The one question I had when I left St. Louis was would I ever get the opportunity to display that again."

He signed a one-year deal with the New York Giants, but was replaced by rookie Eli Manning 10 games into the season after an awful game against the Cardinals.

At 33, Warner found no serious offers, except from the lowly Cards, perennial doormats in the NFL.

Even in Arizona, success never came easily.

"I worked my butt off this year to try to prove they made the right decision, not only this year but when they signed me four years ago," Warner said, "to try to pay back as much as I can for what they've given me."



AP
In this Nov. 16, 2008 file photo, Arizona Cardinals quarterback Kurt Warner is shown in action against the Seattle Seahawks during an NFL football game in Seattle.

Warner was limited by injuries to 10 starts in 2005. In 2006, then-coach Dennis Green made Warner the starter after training camp, but again he was replaced by a rookie—when Matt Leinart took over five games into the season.

Whisenhunt replaced the fired Green in 2007, and Warner had to prove himself all over again.

"This league is so much built on what someone's perception of you is," Warner said. "I know that even when this coaching staff came here ... that they really felt that this guy is on the tail end of his career, he's just kind of hanging on."

Whisenhunt kept Leinart as the starter, but sent Warner into three games to operate a productive, no-huddle offense. Then Leinart went down with a broken collarbone five games into the season, and Warner had the job full time.

He played despite a dislocated elbow in his left, non-throwing arm, earning even more respect from his teammates for his toughness.

Warner threw for 3,417 yards and 27 touchdowns, but at season's end it was the same old story: Leinart was the starter.

Whisenhunt, though, assured Warner he'd have an opportunity to compete for the job in training camp, and after the final preseason game of 2008, Whisenhunt made Warner the starter.

"It was a week and a day before our first regular-season game," Whisenhunt said, "and I stayed up all night making the decision. ... As I've said before, it was a very close competition. It came down to what I felt was the player that gave us the chance to win early."

Warner found an offensive rhythm with his powerhouse group of receivers and the Cardinals took flight. His statistics this season rival those of his St. Louis days, finishing second in the NFL in completions (401), second in completion percentage (67.1), second in yards passing (4,583) and third in passing touchdowns (30).

And the offense kicked into an even higher gear in the playoffs, with the Cardinals beating Atlanta 30-24, Carolina 33-13 and Philadelphia 32-25.

Steelers safety Ryan Clark calls Warner "one of the most accurate passers in the game right now."

"A lot of times, Fitzgerald's covered or Boldin's covered or Breaston's covered, he knows exactly the spot to put it where only his receivers could catch the ball," Clark said.

Warner will make his 20th start of the season on Sunday, the most of his career. As far as his teammates are concerned, he's already a Hall of Famer.

"I told him after the NFC championship that I just want a ticket to Canton, Ohio, when he gets in," defensive end Bertrand Berry said. "When you think about what he's done in his career and what he's accomplished in his career, to think that there is even a question about whether he'll be a Hall of Famer or not, to me, is ridiculous."

Warner's contract with Arizona ends after the Super Bowl. General manager Rod Graves says Warner wants to come back and the Cardinals want to re-sign him. It's hard to imagine him not wanting to keep flinging the ball after a season like this.

But Warner also hints at retirement. His wife Brenda would like him at home with their seven children and he'd have more time to work with his First Things First foundation.

It's a Christian organization to match his faith-based life.

"Everything I do, everywhere I go, I'm trying to live up to or represent Jesus," Warner said. "Having the faith I have is first and foremost in my life."

Man shot by gun owned by Colts' Harrison on trial

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—A Philadelphia man shot with a gun owned by Colts receiver Marvin Harrison is headed to trial Wednesday, accused of lying to police.

Dwight Dixon is scheduled to appear in a Philadelphia municipal court on a charge of making false sworn statements.

Dixon initially told police he was shot during a robbery but later accused Harrison of shooting him. Dixon's attorney, Robert Gamburg, said Dixon did not immediately identify Harrison because he was afraid of him.

Gamburg added Dixon was denied access to his attorney after being shot and spoke under duress.

"I'm shocked that the DA is going forward with it," Gamburg said.

The Philadelphia District Attorney's office declined to comment Tuesday, and calls to Harrison's attorney, Jerome Brown, were not immediately returned.

The shooting last April happened near a North Philadelphia car wash owned by the All-Pro receiver that is about a half mile from Playmakers, a bar he also owns.

According to an arrest report dated April 30, 2008, Dixon was interviewed by police officers at a hospital after being shot and identified himself as Malik Tucker. Dixon told police he had been robbed by two men and was shot during a struggle for a gun, the report said. Dixon later told other officers his real name and signed conflicting statements about where and how he was shot.

Joseph Santiguida, an attorney who represented Dixon in a previous criminal matter, said he went to the hospital immediately after Dixon called and said he'd been shot.

"I walk into his room and Dwight whispers to me, 'Marvin Harrison shot me,'" said Santiguida, who will testify as a witness Wednesday. "He didn't know what to do. He was worried about saying anything because of retribution if word got out and people thought he was a rat. It's a street thing."

When detectives entered the room to interview Dixon, Santiguida said he told police that Dixon did not want to talk.

Santiguida said he and the officers got into an argument, that police had hospital personnel order him to leave and then questioned Dixon.

The 32-year-old Dixon said he sustained "serious and permanent injuries" to his arm and body and a "severe shock" to his nervous system and filed suit last September against Harrison.

Three weeks ago, Philadelphia District Attorney Lynne Abraham announced that five of the six bullet casings found at the shooting scene came from Harrison's weapon, but investigators have conflicting witness accounts of who fired it.

The investigation remains open.

"It's not enough to say that a gun fired a bullet. I'm not prepared to say who fired the gun," Abraham said then.

Harrison was questioned by police soon after the shooting. Harrison said he was at his car wash at the time of the shooting; that he knew Dixon; and that the two had been in a fist fight two weeks earlier after Dixon tried to enter his bar with a gun, Abraham said.

Harrison said his gun had been at his suburban home on the day of the shooting and that it had not been fired since it was bought a year or two earlier, Abraham said.

Police found the weapon, a Belgian-made handgun, at Harrison's car wash a day after the shooting.

Sakovich approves of Villagomez's appointment

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Saipan Swim Club co-founder coach Bill Sakovich believes Mike Villagomez is the most qualified to coach SSC at this time.

"He will make an excellent coach, as he is very knowledgeable and knows how to work with swimmers and prepare them for competition, since he was a good competitor himself," said Sakovich, who coached SSC for the last time in 2004 before handing the reigns to Michael Stewart.

Stewart left the island mid last year and Marianas High School teacher and Masters swimmer Michael Blasberg took over. Villagomez later joined Blasberg as co-coach, before the former finally took over the head coaching post last month.

Sakovich said Villagomez on occasion would work with some of SSC swimmers during his tenure and regularly helped in swim lesson program.

Sakovich

"When he helped us, the swimmers really liked Mike. Mike is a local boy, growing up in Garapan and training at the old Saipan Beach Hotel pool with his two brothers Matt and Richard. He is the first local to be head coach. My wife (Jean) and I have always hoped he would help since he indicated he was interested when he returned to Saipan after finishing school" Sakovich said.

"With Mike at the helm, we feel SSC will become a strong club in the future," the former SSC head coach added.

Sakovich said besides representing CNMI in various tournaments in the 1980s, Villagomez attended a couple of FINA coaching clinics several years ago.

"He was one of the NMI's top swimmers, competed in college, then internationally with my son (Jonathan) and won his share of events. He competed in the South Pacific Games, Pan Pacific Games, and World Championships. His best was back and butterfly, and also had a good freestyle. He is also a member of the CNMI Hall of Fame," Sakovich said.

Villagomez was among the first to be enshrined to the CNMI Sports Hall of Fame in 2004, joining Jean and Bill Sakovich and Tony Rogolifoi on the list.

The Mt. Carmel School alumnus began swimming in 1977 and would later break 16 CNMI records in 1984, the year he was named Male Athlete of the Year.

In 1988, Villagomez enrolled at Vincennes University, Indiana on an athletic scholarship and later on helped his team win a bronze medal in the 4x50 freestyle relay in junior college competitions.

Hatton lawyer gets Pacquiao contract, confident Brit will sign

BOXING

LONDON (AP)—Ricky Hatton's lawyer confirmed on Monday he had received the contract to fight Manny Pacquiao in Las Vegas May 2 and the British fighter planned to sign it within days.

The on-off fight was declared back on again on Friday when Pacquiao, who comes off an easy win over Oscar De La Hoya last month, signed and faxed his contract to the headquarters of promoter Top Rank in Las Vegas.

Pacquiao

"We have got the contract, signed by Manny," Hatton's lawyer, Gareth Williams said on Monday.

The fight was initially in doubt over a dispute over how the purse would be split but Pacquiao is believed to have agreed to a change. Williams said Hatton had so far not had the contract in his possession to sign because he was in Manchester and the lawyer was in London.

"It won't be a problem and we'll announce the fight at a press conference on Thursday," Williams said. "All the pressure is off now."

The contest could well be the fight of year with the big-punching Hatton (45-1), roared on by his huge army of fans, taking on the best pound-for-pound fighter from the Philippines over 12 rounds at junior welterweight.

Hatton's only loss was a 10th-round stoppage by Floyd Mayweather Jr. in December 2007 and Pacquiao (48-3-2) has won his last nine contests, taking the world lightweight title from David Diaz. Pacquiao then moved up two weight divisions to stop De La Hoya in eight rounds at welterweight.

CNMISA island-wide fast-pitch opens Feb. 18

The 2009 season of Men's Island Wide Fast-Pitch Softball League will kick-off on Feb. 18, the CNMI Softball Association announced yesterday.

CNMISA said it is inviting team managers and interested individuals to join this year's tournament.

Instead of Jan. 31, the deadline of fees and completion of pertinent documents had been extended until Feb. 12.

As had been agreed upon during the previous meeting, NMISA said there would be a mandatory meeting of team managers and other interested participants on Feb. 12, starting at 5:30pm at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium conference room.

For more information on this ongoing league, contact 287-4195. ***(Nazario Rodriguez Jr.)***

CORE

From Page 28

Keoni Chariton.

Three other non-CNMI Junior Nationals members are also attending the tryouts that started in December. They are Quincy Johnson, Pete Iguel, and Ringo Reyes.

"This will likely be the make-up of the team for the Oceania, although the lineup could change before the tournament starts. These guys will be playing together in the Bud Cup as part of their training," Aguon said.

Missing on the list were Bill Babauta and Antonio Borja, who played for the Junior Nationals last year, but could not make it to the tryouts, as they are studying in Guam.

Reyes, one of the new faces in the pool, is from Tinian and Aguon is hoping that the former could fix his schedule and join the team in the Bud Cup.

Iguel is a veteran of various leagues on the island and a known gunner giving Aguon another offensive option besides Cruz, who was the scoring champion in OYT.

Johnson is a multi-sports athlete and played for youth leagues on Saipan.

Aguon said he expects his team to be the shortest among the eight squads competing in the tournament Saipan will be hosting. To make up for the lack of ceiling, he is building a fitter and faster team.

"This is a much tougher tournament that the OYT, and like last year, we do not have the height to compete with them, but we can be fitter and faster. We did very well at the last OYT, so we are going to improve in those aspects," Aguon said.

The CNMI Junior Nationals placed sixth in the OYT winning against Papua New Guinea and Palau.

Between now and June, the pool will only have less than five months to get ready for the Oceania caging and Aguon wants his wards to make the most of their short time of preparations.

"A few months are never enough but we have to work with what we have. What we need first are commitment and dedication from all of us. Players need to be committed to the training and to the program. The ideal number of months is year round and of course having the height," Aguon said.

The CNMI mentor added that tryouts are still open for interested players.

"I will be looking out for players that will compliment the style of play that most suit us. Conditioning, skills in certain positions, and execution will be the keys. These will be the guidelines in the final make up of the team," he said.

Tryouts and training sessions are held every Tuesday and Thursday starting at 6pm at the Northern Marianas College Gymnasium.

In the Oceania caging, the CNMI bets will be up against the powerhouse teams of Australia, New Zealand, and Guam, and four other island-members of FIBA Oceania.

CALVO

From Page 28

the fourth quarter ahead by double digits, 43-33, and despite the Lady Rays playing their best game offensively in the fourth canto, outscoring the MCS, 23-16, Calvo's crucial baskets were enough to ensure Mt. Carmel the win.

Meanwhile, the Lady Rays were hoping to enter the win column last night as they collided with Kagman's Lady Ayuyus.

The Lady Ayuyus have a 2-1 record, behind by only a win against the league-leading MHS Lady Dolphins (3-0).

MCS 59 – Calvo 45, Lebria 6, Sablan 4, Cielo 2, Camacho 2.

SSHS 56 – Joseph 12, Mendiola 11, Duenas 8, Sikyang 8, Kim 6, Flores 4, Babauta 3, Maratita 2.

Scoring by quarters: 18-8, 28-19, 43-33, 59-52.

MARIANAS

From Page 28

island, before traveling a meandering route back to the park. An estimated six-mile short course will also be available.

"The Marianas Coffee Trail Run aims to provide challenging trail terrain in the context of a beautiful course," said Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Perry Tenorio. "The three coffee plantations featured in the run are just a taste of the scenic sights along the way."

The course will pass through the old growth plantations of Marianas Coffee owner Chuck Jordan on Mt. Tapachao, and the young plantation and the wild coffee trees found on Attao farm on Navy Hill. The course will also traverse the Camacho bee farm, a dry stream, and trails featured in the annual XTERRA Saipan Championship triathlon.

Show time on race day is 5:30am, followed by a course briefing after all runners have checked in. The event will start at 6:30am.

Registration is now ongoing through MVA. Registration by 5pm Friday, Jan. 30, is $30. Registration on event day must be made by 5:30am and will be $10 additional. Registration fees include a finisher's T-shirt, certificate of participation, and the awards banquet with island barbeque lunch at 11:30am at Micro Beach. Prizes will be awarded for first, second, and third place overall for men and women in both events.

Twenty competitors from Japan have already registered for the event.

Major sponsors of the event are Marianas Coffee Company, MVA, Pacific Development, Inc., and Northern Marianas Athletics. MVA members have donated additional contributions in support of the event.

For more information or to register, contact Akiko Hagiwara at 322-8794 or via e-mail at akiko@pdisaipan.com or Edward Diaz of MVA at 664-3200/01 or at ediaz@mymarianas.com. ***(PR)***

THREE

From Page 27

ing are temporarily suspended pending the submission of league requirements, such as payment of the entrance fee.

First Game

Dollar Days 96 – Bernardo 21, Siriban 20, Diyco 13, Pantaleon 8, Demapan 6, Tangcoy 6, De Vero 5, Laquian 4, Pangilinan 4, Abuel 4, Galvez 3.

Shooters 59 – Mangali 20, De Guzman 17, Guellas 8, Barroso 5, Caranto 4, Feliciano 2.

Scoring by quarters: 27-13. 53-28, 77-42, 96-59.

Second Game

Docomo 86 – Rasa 29, Ry. Sanciangco 24, Lee 8, Hamoy 7, Miranda 6, Diaz 5, Manibusan 4, Cultura 2.

MIGS 83 – Lerio 27, Cadagat 23, Palero 18, Concepcion 5, Capalad 4, Omampo 2, Doronilla 2, Norita 2.

Scoring by quarters: 25-22, 42-47, 57-65, 86-83.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE
Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	37	9	.804	–
Philadelphia	21	22	.488	14 1/2
New Jersey	20	25	.444	16 1/2
New York	19	25	.432	17
Toronto	18	28	.391	19

Southeast Division

Orlando	34	10	.773	–
Atlanta	26	18	.591	8
Miami	24	19	.558	9 1 / 2
Charlotte	19	26	.422	15 1/2
Washington	9	35	.205	25

Central Division

Cleveland	35	8	.814	–
Detroit	24	19	.558	11
Milwaukee	22	26	.458	15 1/2
Chicago	18	27	.400	18
Indiana	17	28	.378	19

WESTERN CONFERENCE
Southwest Division

San Antonio	30	14	.682	–
New Orleans	27	14	.659	1 1/2
Houston	28	18	.609	3
Dallas	25	19	.568	5
Memphis	11	33	.250	19

Northwest Division

Denver	30	15	.667	–
Portland	27	17	.614	2 1/2
Utah	25	21	.543	5 1/2
Minnesota	16	27	.372	13
Oklahoma City	10	35	.222	20

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	35	9	.795	–
Phoenix	25	18	.581	9 1 / 2
Golden State	14	31	.311	21 1/2
L.A. Clippers	10	34	.227	25
Sacramento	10	36	.217	26

Wednesday's Games
Orlando 135, Indiana 111
Cleveland 117, Sacramento 110
Denver 100, Memphis 85
San Antonio 106, Utah 100
Charlotte 117, L.A. Lakers 110, 2OT

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOCAL SCORES

NAVY HILL BASKETBALL STANDINGS

RBC Rollers	4	0
Docomo	4	0
Dollar Days	4	0
MBI	3	2
Athlete's Foot	2	2
Uncle Ben	2	1
MIGS	1	2
Inscape	1	3
IT& E	1	3
670 Rollers	0	2
San Antonio Shooters	0	3
Mobil	0	4

MISO BASKETBALL STANDINGS
Boys

MHS	2	0
KHS	1	1
SSHS	0	2

Girls

MHS	3	0
KHS	2	1
MCS	1	2
SSHS	0	3

Art of War 3 set for March 14

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.

Saipan's Daniel Ogo is on top of Kevin Esteves in the early part of first round of their bout in the Rites of Passage VI: Conviction on Saturday at the Saipan World Resort. Esteves won this bout via tap out in one minute and one second of the first round.

Trench Tech Inc. president and promoter Cuki Alvarez announced yesterday that the Art of War 3 All-Island Grappling Submission Challenge would be held on March 14 at the Trench Tech Gym in Afetnas.

Interested fighters may sign up for the No Gi Unarmed Combat tournament with an entry fee of $20. Call Cuki Alvarez or Randy Taylor for more details at 483-4MMA or 483-8670.

Fee for spectators will be $5.

All weight categories will be represented with over 100 grapplers from around the CNMI as well as competitors from the Philippines.

Alvarez said brown belt and black belt super fights would be featured in this event.

Meanwhile, Alvarez expressed appreciation to those who helped the success of last Saturday's Rites of Passage VI: Conviction at the Royal Taga Hall of the Saipan World Resort.

"We continue to hold these events to promote goodwill and sportsmanship. We fight to make friends," he said.

Some of the proceeds of the event went to the make a Make-A-Wish Foundation, which he said is a way of giving back to the community.

"We specially thank the fight fans because without you MMA is nothing," he said.

Alvarez said it was a great show.

"This is one of the best tournaments we have. We have a full house crowd. The fights were awesome and we will have more events like this to come," he said.

Fighters from Guam went home with a 6-0 record against their opponents from Saipan.

Trench Tech paid the trip for Team Guam, said Alvarez.

Here are the official complete results of Saturday's event:

■ Ray Apiag (Guam, 152 lbs.) defeated Fiden Teregoyo (151 lbs.) in 1:27 of second round tap out (flurry of strikes);

■ Jerome Fujihira (Trench Tech 130 lbs.) defeated Jacob Ilo (Zalaka, 130 lbs.) in the 4th round via unanimous decision;

■ Jordan Ogo (Haga T, 125 lbs.) defeated Barry Mality (Pwang 129 lbs.) in 1:26 of 3rd round by tap out (punches);

■ Rob Baza (MTM Guam, 131 lbs.) defeated Reagan Mality (Pwang, 130 lbs) in 1:24 1st round via referee stoppage (flurry of punches);

■ Mark Nuique (Trench Tech, 148 lbs.) defeated Stanley Ogo (Haga T, 157 lbs.) in 1:00 of the 1st round stoppage (cut elbow strike);

■ Daniel Ogo (Haga T, 127 lbs.), defeated Kev Esteves (Marianas Elite, 130 lbs.) in 1:01 of 1st round (guillotine choke submission);

■ Peter Alvarez (Spike 22, 150 lbs.) defeated Joe Aldan (Predators, 150 lbs.) in 1:59 of 1st round (rear naked choke);

■ Seung Min Lee (Trench Tech, 145 lbs.) defeated Henry Taga (independent, 150 lbs.) 3rd round (unanimous decision).

■ Female match, Stacey Ramangmao (Team Tarantula, 130 lbs.) defeated Mocklin Enisar (112 lbs.) in 2:15 of 2nd round (verbal tap out);

■ Martin Ayuyu (Marianas Elite, 135 lbs.) defeated Francisco Palacios (D.A.T., 135 lbs) in 2:38 of 1st round tap out (rear-naked choke);

■ Tom Kim (Trench Tech, 160 lbs.) defeated E.J. Palacios (D.A.T., 160 lbs.) in 1:41 of 1st round tap out (rear-naked choke);

■ Kyle Peterson (Trench Tech, 185 lbs.) defeated George Cruz (independent, 190 lbs.) in 1:48 of 2nd round tap out (ground and pound);

■ Tony Reyes (Spike 22/Ground-Fu, 141 lbs.) defeated Derick "El Peligro" Rangamar (Marianas Elite, 140 lbs.) in 1:24 of 2nd round by tap out (triangle choke submission);

■ Hosea "The Killa B" Ware (Spike 22/Ground-Fu, 185 lbs.) defeated Syl "The Deal" Teregeyo (Marianas Elite, 185 lbs.) in 1:48 of 1st round by tap out (rear-naked choke); and

■ Ryan Urquizu (Fight To Win/BJT Entertainment, 150 lbs.) defeated Maitai "The Charger" Charley (Marianas Elite, 150 lbs.) in 11 seconds of 1st round via technical knock out/ referee stoppage.

Three teams tied for lead in Navy Hill caging

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Dollar Days and Docomo recorded contrasting wins Tuesday night at the Garapan Basketball Court to force a three-way tie for the lead in the 2008 Navy Hill Friendship Basketball League.

Dollar Days cruised past the San Antonio Shooters in the first game, 96-59, while Docomo pulled off an 86-83 triumph over MIGS in the second match.

Docomo and Dollar Days now have identical 4-0 records, sharing the top spot with RBC Rollers.

Dollar Days dominated the game from the opening tip until the final buzzer handing the Shooters to their third loss in as many games.

Kae Bernardo and Joey Siriban combined for 19 of Dollar Days' 27 first quarter points, allowing their team to 14-point advantage after 10 minutes of play, 27-13.

The Shooters never recovered from thereon, as they failed to live up to their name after missing numerous attempts and losing the ball several times.

The Shooters struggled offensively failing to score more than 15 points in all the four quarters of the game. They had 15 markers in the second and fourth canto and 14 in the third period.

Only two players scored in double figures for the Shooters with Eugene Mangali making 20 points and George De Guzman adding 17. The rest of the Shooters combined for 19 points with only four players besides De Guzman and Caranto making it to the scoreboard.

With Dollar Days enjoying a big lead as early as in the first period, it had the luxury of using its bench and getting several players involved on offense.

Dollar Days had 11 players tallying points with Bernardo leading the way with 21 points. Bon Tamayo chipped in 20, while Jomer Diyco contributed 13. The eight others combined for 40 points.

In the second game, Docomo pulled off a come-from-behind win over MIGS.

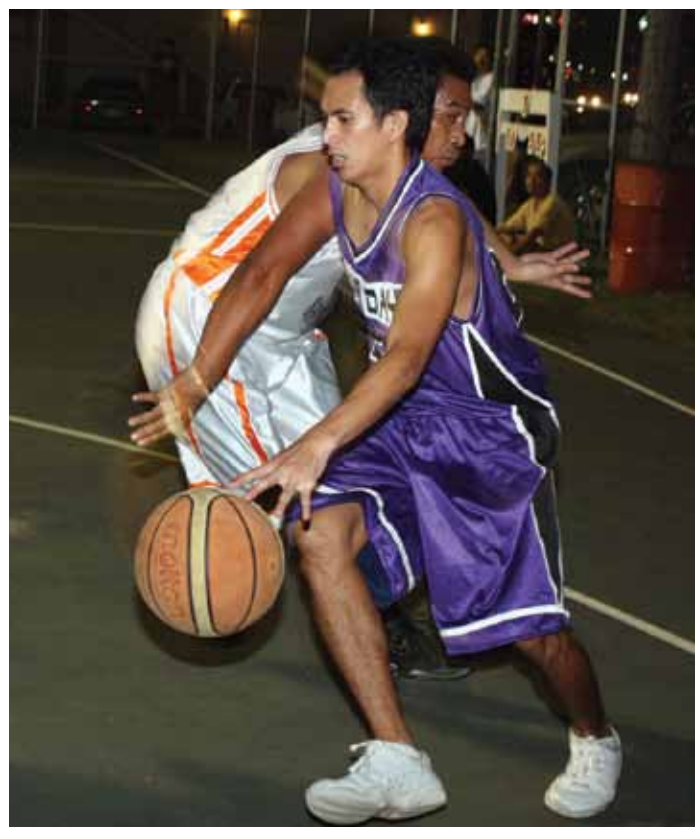
Docomo was trailing at the end of the third period, 57-65, when it outscored MIGS in the payoff canto, 29-18, to eke out a three-point win.

Ponce Rasa and Ryan Sanciangco anchored Docomo's rally in the fourth nailing 11 and eight points, respectively.

Rasa finished with 29 points, while Sanciangco tallied 24.

Games in the Navy Hill cag-

See THREE on Page 26



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Dollar Days' Wowie Abuel dribbles past a San Antonio Shooters defender during their game in the Navy Hill caging Tuesday night at the Garapan Basketball Court.

CPA meets Freedom Air; two other games set today

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

Commonwealth Ports Authority will test the mettle of Freedom Air in one of three exciting match-ups today in the 2008 Budweiser Inter-Fovernment/ Business Softball League at the Capital Hill Ballfield.

CPA is currently sporting a 9-1 win-loss record, good for second place behind league-leading Department of Community and Cultural Affairs.

As of press time last night, defending champion DCCA was seeking its 12th win in a row against Hopwood (0-10).

Department of Land and Natural Resources was also scheduled to play against Law and Order. DLNR was carrying a 5-5 card, while Law and Order is at 3-7.

Last night's third game was between Commonwealth Health Center and Mayor's Office.

CHC has a record of 3-7 and Mayor's Office was trying to score its second win this season after losing 10 games.

But Freedom Air should not be taken lightly and a victory in their 8:30pm scheduled encounter would change the two teams' position in the overall standings.

Freedom Air is lagging behind by just one game with its 8-1 record in third place.

In fourth place is No Zone (8-2), which is pitted against an equally strong opponent in Docomo at 7:30pm.

Docomo is in eighth place with 6-4.

In another exciting match-up, Joeten Motor Jets will play against P&S in today's opener at 6:30pm.

The Jets are in sixth position with a 7-3 win-loss record, while the P&S is in ninth at 5-4.

Tomorrow's game will be DEQ/CRM (5-5) vs. Customs (2-8) at 6:30pm and CUC (3-7) vs. PIC (2-7) at 8:30pm.

In the women's side, Finance and CUC will part their ways in their 7:30pm game. Both teams are tied with identical 3-4 win-loss markings.

Youth Senator wants new gymnasium in Rota

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

A new gymnasium is needed to support and promote athletic activities in Rota, according to Sen. John Ayuyu, floor leader of the 11th CNMI Youth Congress.

Such a gymnasium, he said, would also serve the people in Rota during assemblies and it could also be used as an amphitheater.

Ayuyu thus introduced YC Resolution 11-11, which was unanimously adopted during the second regular session on Jan. 17, to request the 16th CNMI Legislature to appropriate funds for it.

The youth senator wants the gymnasium to be erected at the Rota High School campus that would eventually serve the students as a safe sports and recreational center.

Ayuyu said that the old gymnasium on Rota has not been properly maintained and had suffered damages due to typhoons.

He said the gym's windows, floor, and roof are leaking and are unsafe for any kind of activities.

Ayuyu said that the lack of proper sports facility would often force residents to hold activities in the outdoor or in unsafe field, not to mention the uncooperative weather condition and other improprieties.

Although, they are creative enough to resort to other available venues, Ayuyu said the residents, especially the students, often risk their safety and health.

Ayuyu stressed that such a dangerous situation can only be remedied by putting up a modernized sports facility or gymnasium.

He said Rota public schools can facilitate friendly and healthy intramural sports competitions if only they will have a well-maintained gymnasium.

"The fundamentals of sports and physical activities encourage discipline and builds character and teaches the youth important virtues," Ayuyu stated in his resolution.

He also said sports teaches respect, sportsmanship, courage, as well as proper calisthenics that are very important for young minds.

He said this is also a way of reducing diseases and illnesses if the community will go hand in hand in promoting physical activities.

Art of War 3 set for March 14

Trench Tech Inc. president and promoter Justis Cuki Alvarez announced yesterday that the Art of War 3 All-Island Grappling Submission Challenge would be held on March 14 at the Trench Tech Gym in Afetnas.

27

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Diaw, Brown lead Bobcats past Lakers

Boris Diaw had 23 points, nine rebounds and nine assists, reserve Shannon Brown scored five of his 14 points in the second overtime, and the Charlotte Bobcats continued their surprising recent domination of the Los Angeles Lakers.

24

Lotte Giants looking good at spring training

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

The Lotte Giants, one of two South Korean pro baseball teams currently on Saipan for spring training, is looking good for the upcoming 2009 season of the Korean Baseball Organization.

KBO is the Major League in Korea. The Giants are one of the original franchises of the league. From 1982 through 1986 they played in Gudeok Stadium, and since then, in Sajik Baseball Stadium. They are owned by Lotte and won the KBO Championship in 1984 and 1992. Since then, they never made it to the playoffs until last year.

Third place overall in 2008 with 69 wins in 126 games played in the regular season, the Giants are pinning their hopes on three national players who helped stash away the gold medal from the U.S. in the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

They are made up of reigning KBO homerun king Lee Dae Ho, catcher Kang Min Ho, and pitcher Song Sung Joon.

Lee was selected for the South Korean Junior National Team as a pitcher in 2000. The team won the 1997 World Junior Baseball Championship in Edmonton, Canada, and Lee led the attack alongside Kim Tae-Kyun, Choo Shin-Soo (the eventual MVP of the event), and Jeong Keun-Woo by hitting .400-plus batting average.

American coach Fernando Arroyo said Lee is one of the best Korean sluggers and pitchers.

"We reached the playoffs last year for the first time in eight years. I'm pretty sure that experience will help us make better than good this time," he said during a break in the team's training camp at the Kan Pacific Ballfield in Marpi yesterday.

Arroyo played with the Detroit Tigers, Minnesota Twins, and Oakland A's and retired in 1986.

"Our three Olympians will lead us but we have another player who became a superstar in the league last year," Arroyo said.

He was referring to second baseman Seung Hwan Cho.

The team will also again be counting on the services of Mexican import Karim Garcia, who made 29 homeruns and 115 RBIs for the Giants last year.

Garcia played with the New York Yankees, Arizona Diamondbacks, and Detriot Tigers.

Jerry Royster became the first American team manager in Korea last year and transformed the team into one of the league's best offensive teams.

Arroyo said the Giants could capitalize on that aspect this year.

"I think that this time will have good offense and good starting pitchers. Offense really will be the key in this team. We're looking good in training camp," he said.

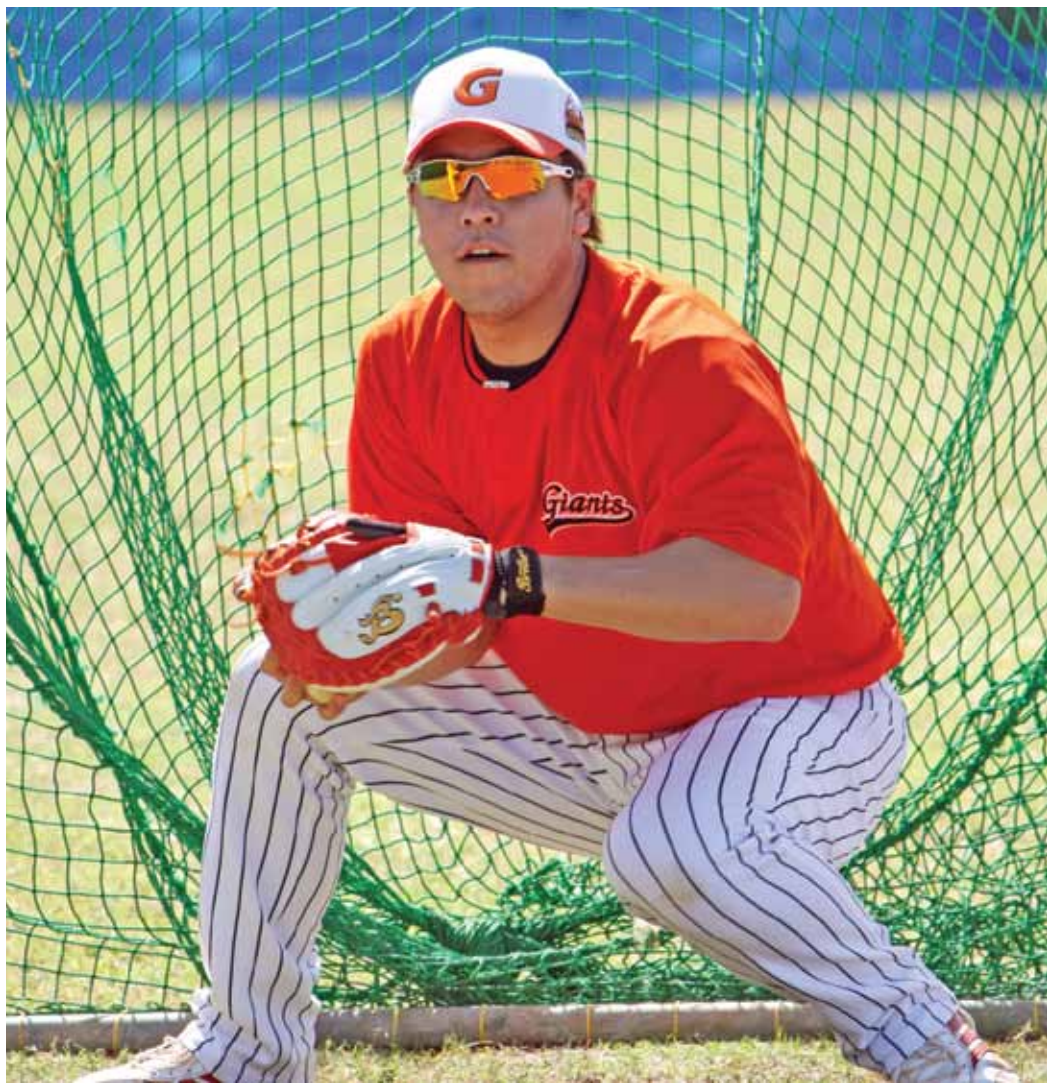
This has been the third time that the Giants are holding the camp on Saipan. They are currently staying at The Palms Resort.

The LG Twins is the other Korean pro team currently on Saipan for spring training.

The Giants have a total of 25 players, four coaches, two trainers, and six managers.

One of the managers, Bae Jae Hu, is confident the team will return to the playoffs and hopefully hit the Giants' ultimate goal of winning the championship.

The Giants started their camp on Jan. 22. They will leave on Feb. 28.



BY NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
Lotte Giants catcher Kang Min Ho is one of three Beijing Olympic gold medalists in the team's roster. He is seen here practicing at the Kan Pacific Ballfield during the team's training camp yesterday.

Calvo lifts Lady Knights to first win

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Mt. Carmel School broke into the win column in the girls varsity division of the 2008-2009 MISO Basketball League after edging Saipan Southern High School, 59-56, Friday night at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

The Lady Knights dropped their first two matches before gaining their first victory after a three-point win over the Lady Rays, who now have a 0-3 record.

Noelle Calvo exploded for a season-high 45 points to lead the Lady Knights to victory.

She was the lone Mt. Carmel player to score in the second half, helping the Knights halt the Rays' rally and preserve the win.

Calvo earned a living from the 15-foot line, going 10-for-13 from the foul line in the fourth quarter alone. She fired 16 points in the final canto against the 23 points of the entire Southern crew.

Calvo and Nicole Lebria made six points apiece in the first quarter, giving the Lady Knights an 18-8 lead. Megan Sablan and Justalyn Camacho contributed four and two markers, respectively.

The burly Calvo continued to bang her way into the shaded lane in the second period, adding eight more points to keep Mt. Carmel in the driver's seat, 28-19.

The second half was another Calvo show with the member of the CNMI Junior National Women's Team making all of Mt. Carmel's 15 points in the third period.

The Lady Knights entered

See CALVO on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Mt. Carmel's Noelle Calvo, left, defends against Marianas High School's Lalaine Pagarao in this fastbreak play during their game in the MISO caging last week at the MHS Gymnasium.The Lady Knights lost, but broke into the win column after beating Southern, 59-56, Friday night.

Core of Junior Nationals to play for CNMI in Oceania basketball

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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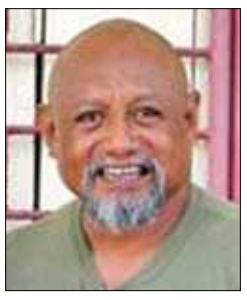
REPORTER

Some members of the CNMI Junior Nationals will have a second tour of duty, as they will represent the Commonwealth in the 2009 Oceania Basketball Tournament in June.

Coach Rufino Aguon said most of the players attending the tryouts and training sessions for the CNMI Men's Nationals are members of the youth squad, which played in last year's Oceania Youth Tournament in Guam.

The list includes Jayvan Tarkong, Marvin Rabauliman, Jomary Tumaquip, Joseph White, Allen Moses, James Camacho, Jericho Cruz, and

See CORE on Page 26



Aguon

Marianas Coffee Trail Run reveals mountain plantations

A normal trek through the jungles of Saipan brings plenty of encounters with bamboo, palms, *tangentangen*, breadfruit, and numerous other trees. This Saturday, trail runners will also discover several less-seen coffee plantations featured in the 2nd Annual Marianas Coffee Trail Run.

The estimated 10-mile run will begin at American Memorial Park Micro Beach and head to the peak of Mt. Tapochao, the highest point of the

See MARIANAS on Page 26

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Competitors in the 2008 Marianas Coffee Trail Run set off from American Memorial Park in Saipan at the break of dawn. The Marianas Visitors Authority is now accepting registrations for the 2nd Annual Marianas Coffee Trail Run to be held this Saturday.